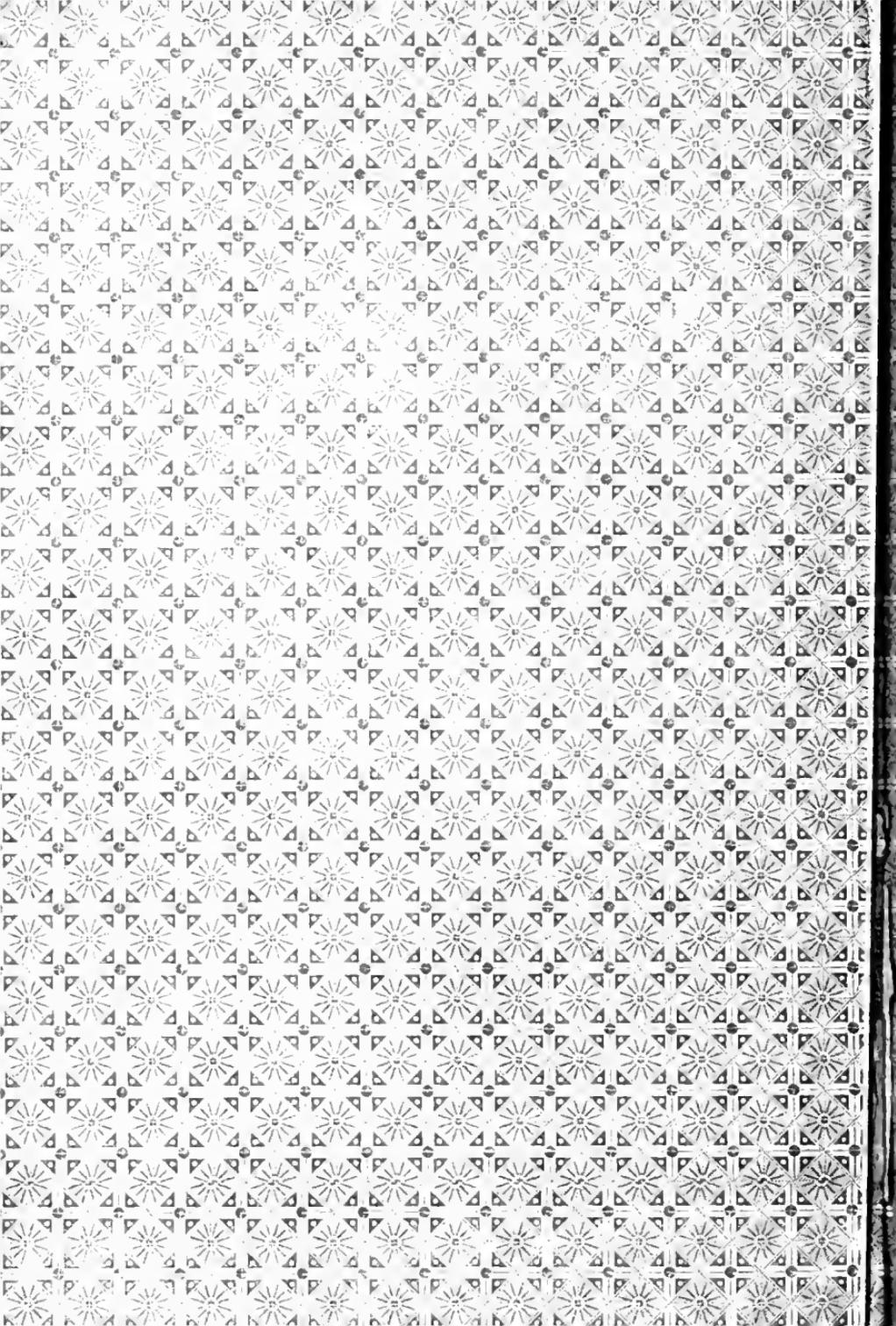
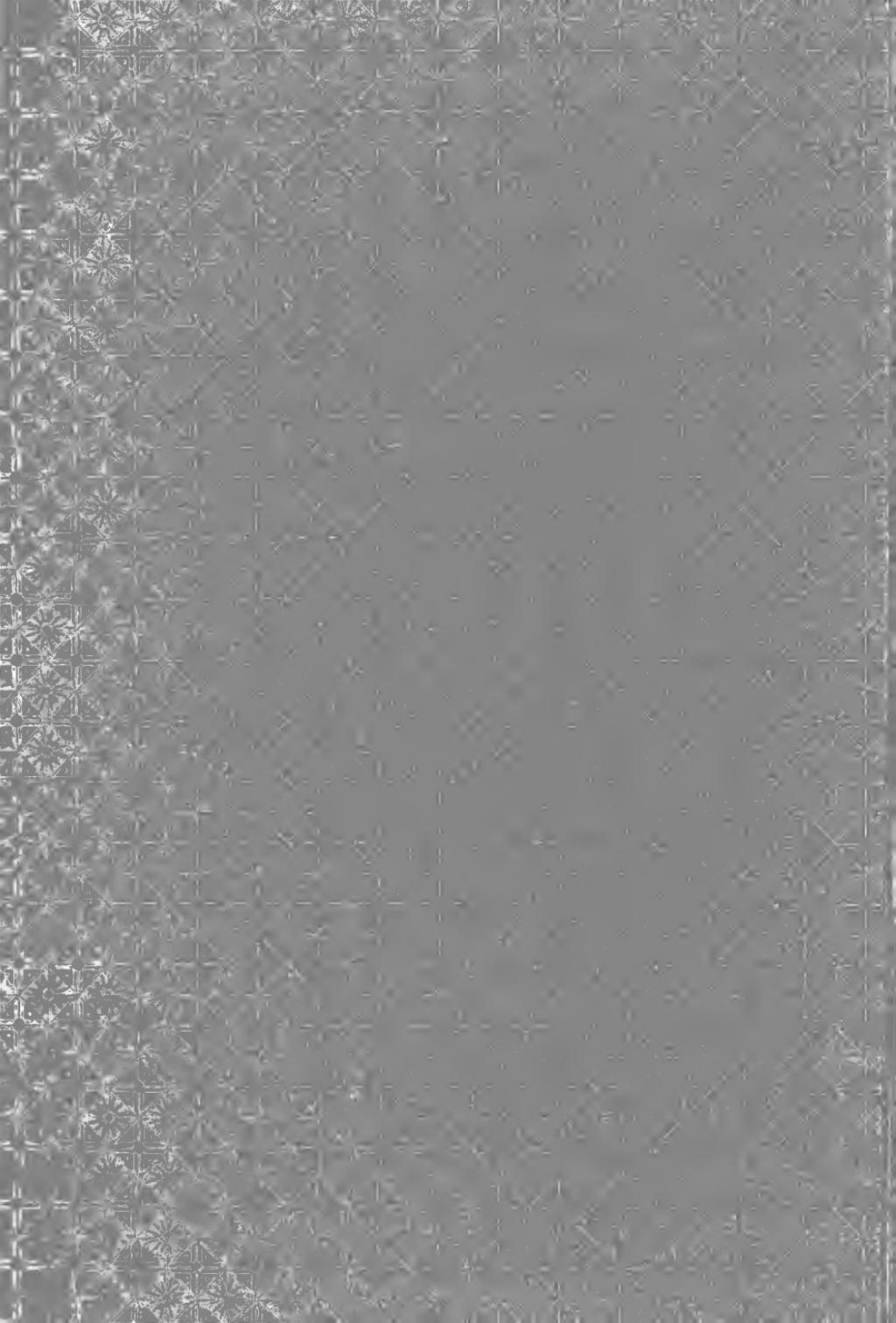


SCRIP AND STAFF

HUGUNIN







To
Rev. G. D. Pontious, from the Author.

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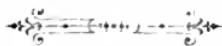
MEDITATIONS OF A WAYFARER.



"As ye go, preach"---Matthew x., 7.

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BY HENRY M. HUGUNIN,
AUTHOR OF "SPIRIT-POSSESSION," ETC.



CHICAGO:
THOS. B. ARNOLD & CO., PUBLISHERS.
1884.

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Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1883,
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PRELUDE.



THE CHRISTIAN LIFE.

We trust in thee, O Lord—
'Tis all that we can do;
We glory in thy word—
Our FAITH renew!

We would draw nigh to thee,
For thou art ever true;
We would thy glory see—
Our HOPE renew!

Forever to thee, Lord,
To whom all praise is due,
Whose smiles our joys afford—
Our LOVE renew!

Our times are in thy hand—
To Christ we bow the knee;
Strong in his strength we stand,
And *live to thee!*

SCRIPT AND STAFF.

CHAPTER I.

THE SAVING LOVE OF GOD—ITS CONDITIONS.

JOHN BUNYAN, the famous author of the “Pilgrim’s Progress,” was in his youth extremely wicked, and afterward became one of the holiest men of his times, through God’s saving love and the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. At the period of his conversion from sin to righteousness, and in the earlier years of his Christian experience, he suffered greatly from the temptations and assaults of our spiritual adversary for many months, deriving only brief intervals of comfort from his religious life. In one of his dark hours he seemed to hear God saying to him, “I loved thee before thou didst sin; I loved thee while thou wert sinning; and I loved thee after thou hadst sinned.” In his condition at that time, it gave him considerable satisfaction, and is worth a few moments’ consideration.

God’s love for his creatures has been manifested ever since the beginning of the world, in a general manner, by their preservation, by providing them with the necessa-

ries and comforts of life, and by many other temporal blessings. But this is not his saving love.

The crucifixion of our Lord Jesus Christ was an act of saving love, by which a dying world might be redeemed from sin and eternal misery, and men and women made inheritors of the joys of everlasting life in heaven. It was the highest manifestation of love ever made in the universe, and none but God has ever been able to comprehend its fullness.

But it was not then, to individuals of this generation, (in one sense) a saving love, for as yet they had no existence. To those who were then alive it might have been—and probably was to many—a source of salvation. But God knew that we should live in this age of the world, and so he loved us before we sinned.

When we came into the world we were conceived in sin and “shapen in iniquity.” The sin of Adam was in our souls, not by our consent, but because it was our inheritance, and the curse of sin hung over us as it had over all previous members of our race. As we grew to youth and manhood, the burden of sin increased upon us, because of our own acts. But even then God loved us. Still it was not a saving love, for those who had died in an unconverted condition were not exempt from eternal shame and misery.

And why? Simply because they rejected God’s great love and plan of salvation which our Lord Jesus Christ died upon the cross to perfect. In rejecting him they lost their souls.

The fault was theirs, not God's. They were rational, responsible beings, and the issue was directly between God and their own wills. His love was able and willing to save them, but they chose to remain in rebellion to him.

Many others of this generation have seen the necessity of salvation from sin and its consequences, and have accepted it upon God's terms. Then, to them, God has indeed shown his saving love in all its fullness and richness. They accepted it just as he desired they should, and he has put away their sins from them "as far as the east is from the west." They have received new life, new thoughts, new hopes, new affections, new desires, and have become "new creatures in Christ" throughout.

So God has loved them before they sinned, while they were sinners, and after they had sinned. Best of all, he loves them now, and they love him.

As it was with them, so it may be with every sinner who still lives. Our Lord Jesus Christ is still "the way, the truth and the life," "the same yesterday, to-day, and forever," and his love has not grown cold, nor diminished, nor lost its power to save, nor become less precious to those who enjoy it. It can still save from sin, and from being overcome by temptations, and cleanse us from all iniquity.

CHAPTER II.

OUR SALVATION DEPENDS UPON FAITH.

EVERY one should pray for faith. Even sinners, who have no hope and are living without God in the world, should pray for faith (although it be a mere mental effort, and not an earnest, spiritual exercise), if they are sincere in seeking after truth. Such may pray that God will enable them to believe whatever they ought to believe, and to reject all false beliefs. A prayer like that will reach the throne of grace, and God, the source of all wisdom, who "giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not," will answer it. The probable effect of such a prayer would be, first, a deep conviction of sinfulness, a casting away of self-righteousness and infidelity, and then a fleeing to the cross of Christ for salvation through faith in his Name.

Christ's disciples prayed him to increase their faith in him as God and in the lessons that he taught. They felt that they could not safely depend upon their own judgment or emotions to fix these essential truths in their souls. With us, as with them, this work must be performed by the Holy Ghost. For a weak belief nothing is

more effectual than going with submissive prayer for increased grace to "the author and finisher of our faith."

We have few better illustrations of the faith of Christian professors than that recorded in the fourteenth chapter of Matthew's gospel, from the twenty-fifth verse to the thirty-fourth. There was the Lord, in the fourth watch of the long and toilsome night, walking majestically upon the stormy sea, after lonely hours of prayer. Here, in the fishers' boat, were Peter and the sons of Zebedee, tossed and hindered by the storm all night, waiting for the dawn, and striving to gain the shore where they expected to meet the Master on the morrow. Soon they beheld him approaching them, walking upon the troubled waters, and although they waited to welcome his return with loving hearts, they were frightened at this new manifestation of his divinity. But Peter, more impatient than the others, must have some further evidence of the Master's power, and craves an invitation to go and meet his Lord. His desire is granted, and he steps from the boat out upon the sea, and walks safely there. Thus far his faith has not faltered, but when the angry waves come sweeping along, threatening to engulf him, his confidence weakens, and poor human nature trembles. But the Lord is nigh to help, and Peter's faith assumes a new form. In his fear he does not turn back toward the boat, nor call to James and John to deliver him. A weaker disciple may, in his hour of trial, be tempted to return to the world which he has relinquished, for refuge and comfort. But Peter simply stretched forth his hands toward the loving Jesus and

cried, "Save, Lord, or I perish!" Was his prayer unanswered, and he left to struggle in the overwhelming waters? No, he had not looked to human arms to rescue him, but in his extremity he trusted in God and found salvation.

"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved," said Paul to the jailer at Philippi, and from all the New Testament that cry comes forth to every repentant sinner.

"For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

CHAPTER III.

THE REQUIREMENT OF ENTIRE CONSECRATION.

ONE of the earliest steps toward holy living, after conversion, is to reconsecrate the entire being to the service of God. At first, to some souls, this may seem to be a heavy cross to bear, but in most cases, in the freshness of the new love to God and man born into the soul of the convert, it is a pleasure to lay down at the feet of the Saviour all that he is, and all that he has, and understandingly devote all—life, property and strength—to the cause of Christ. The blessing which follows such a consecration more than repays the sacrifice, and bestows upon the consecrator the wealth of grace that makes his Christian life more enviable than that of an angel.

Such a consecration comprises two great principles or motives:

“None but Christ.” None other to love, to worship, to honor and obey with all the heart, mind and strength; none other to depend upon as a Saviour, help, guide and comforter; none other to serve and follow with unflinching integrity while life itself shall last, through health and sickness, prosperity and adversity.

"All to Christ." Yes, *all*; standing ever ready to devote all our time, talents, members, means, friends and self to the Redeemer's service, making the consecration so perfect that the convert shall be wholly his who has bought him with his own precious blood, who has adopted him into his heavenly family, and who has prepared for those who love him such glorious things as eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man conceived.

Does it seem too much to yield? It is in this complete consecration that we find our perfect spiritual peace—that peace which in degree and kind passes all human conception, which is the seal of our sanctification, and a foretaste of the glory that awaits the faithful in our Father's house beyond the grave.

We may be sure that this entire consecration is our duty; that if we do not have the grace to make it we cannot do so, and that God would never require it of us if he knew that we could not make it and maintain it by his help.

It is a solemn act to make this consecration, but without it how can fallen man have that fellowship with Christ which every new-born soul desires? Let us, then, esteem it a great privilege to make it, to keep all on the altar day by day, and expect and receive the blessing which it is sure to bring.

CHAPTER IV.

THE GOOD SHEPHERD LOVETH HIS SHEEP.

How thankful we all ought to be because our Saviour, in his list of beatitudes, gave place to the following: "Happy are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." And all through the New Testament we find this consoling sentiment pervading the teachings of Christ and his apostles, so that by it the humble Christian, conscious of his utter inability to keep himself from sin, is more fully led to rest in the strong arms and precious promises of his Good Shepherd, and look to him continually for the help and protection that he needs.

One of the most beautiful of our Lord's parables is that which represents the hireling fleeing and forsaking his flock in the hour of danger, while the Good Shepherd, willing to lay down his life for his sheep, leads them to places of safety and peace. But then this was (and is) the character of Jesus—to stand by, encourage and protect his followers in every time of trial and danger. To the self-confident, the self-reliant, the boasters, he never comes in this manner. But the soul that trusts implicitly in him—the soul that seeks only to please God under all cir-

cumstances, whatever the consequences may be, is stronger than the warrior in his armor, for God and all his holy angels are pledged, through the sufferings and death of our Redeemer, to defend the true Christian in time and eternity. Hence, human weakness has become strength through the all-prevailing might of our Lord and Master. Said the apostle, in this light, "When ye are weak, then ye are strong;" and it is this glorious privilege of closely uniting the human and divine that makes us overcomers of the hosts of sin—of foes without and foes within—that takes away the fear of men and devils, and opens the doors of heaven to all believers.

Oh, the tender compassion and loving-kindness of God! Well might the psalmist exclaim that it is better than life itself, for it is able to raise the dead, renew the soul, and destroy sin; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

CHAPTER V.

RELIGIOUS REVIVALS—WHY NECESSARY.

To "revive" is to infuse new energy into a creature that has once lived and still lives, but in whom the life has become weak and spiritless. That which has never lived cannot be revived; a stone, for instance, has no vital principle to be renewed—it is passive in its nature, and although it may undergo certain changes until it is no longer a stone, it can never become a sentient, responsible creature. On the other hand, a human being may become physically, mentally or spiritually exhausted until very little vitality remains; but "while there is life there is hope" of health and normal vigor returning. If life is totally extinct, none but the resurrection power of God can restore the lost vitality.

A natural life, in its full vigor, brings forth fruits to manifest its existence and energy, by benefiting others around it as well as by testifying to its own perfect condition.

So Christians and churches in the enjoyment of full salvation, conscious purity, and the possession of that "perfect love that casteth out fear," are in good condition to

aid in the conversion of sinners, and perform those works of charity which the vital religion of Christ always prompts.

But if, through a lack of watching and praying, through the influence of divers temptations, and a return to carnality, Christians and churches fall into a backslidden condition, so that faith, hope and charity have about died out, it is time that efforts should be made to infuse new life and religious fervor into them.

Hence the need of revivals, from time to time, to draw Christians and churches nearer to God, and prepare them to labor for the conversion of sinners.

But why may not—nay, why *should* not—all Christians and all Christian churches keep *always* fully saved of God, and so be ready to carry on a continuous work of salvation among the unconverted? In other words, is there any necessity of real pilgrims losing their salvation, becoming lean in soul, or of their churches waxing cold and formal in devotion? In the order of God it is not so.

Strange, suggests some one, that a true saint should ever need reviving spiritually, and especially a shepherd of saints.

Well, it is strange, for in the economy of God's kingdom the language of the gospel is, "Rejoice in the Lord *always*, and again I say rejoice." (Philippians iv. 4.) But if the peace and joy have died out of pilgrim hearts, how can they proclaim the "good tidings of great joy for all people?" Then there *must* be a revival, or the church will only have "a name that thou livest and art dead." (Revelation iii. 1.)

CHAPTER VI.

THE SUNDAY NEWSPAPER AND ITS EVIL INFLUENCES.

THE toper must have his ardent spirits; the smoker, his tobacco; the pleasure-seeker, his amusements, and the average citizen his Sunday-newspaper. For in each of these cases the thirst for a stimulant overcomes any conscientious scruples that may arise to warn the victim of the danger that lies within and follows after the indulgence of the ruling desires of the flesh. It may seem a little strange to class the Sunday-newspaper reader with the toper, but even our reading may become intemperate and lead to a disobedience of God's laws. And this error is becoming so general, in the case of the Sunday-newspaper as to affect the moral and religious standards of society. The reading of the secular paper on Sunday, filled as it is with social and novel attractions, tends to keep people away from the services of God's house by consuming the time that should be employed in preparing for church, by deadening any latent devotional spirit which the recurrence of the Lord's day might naturally excite, and by taking the place of the forenoon sermon. It also tends to debase the mind to that degree that pleasure ex-

cursions from home, Sunday concerts, and even theatrical performances, begin to assume a harmless character in public opinion; and it is not easy to dissociate the idea of Sunday-newspaper reading from any or all the other forms of Sabbath-breaking which now defile our land.

The influence of the Sunday-newspaper is not confined to the precincts of the great cities where they are printed. Special railroad trains, another Sabbath-breaking institution, scatter the Sunday-papers far and wide into the suburban and country villages, where the result is almost as deleterious as it is in the metropolis. Thus many men, women and boys, including local news-dealers, are brought into a violation of the Lord's holy day by the certainty of reaping a profit from the sale of the Sunday-paper.

It may be true that the editors and printers of these papers are not obliged to work after a certain hour on Sunday morning, but still *they* debase the sacred Sabbath by their own early toil and subsequent slumbers as much as those who distribute the result of their Sunday-morning labor. Attempts to excuse any one who is engaged in this disobedience to God's law must signally fail, for there is no apology that can annul the responsibility of any individual to keep the Sabbath holy. No plea that it is a necessary work to sell, or a lawful recreation to read, the Sunday-paper will be admitted at the bar of God. No redeeming trait attaches to its manufacture, sale or use, any more than to the production, traffic and consumption of ardent spirits. Custom cannot establish a lawful precedent in either case. The curse of God that follows all

Sabbath-breaking will ultimately overtake both practices. "Happy is that people whose God is the Lord," for they are not the patrons of the Sunday-newspaper.

CHAPTER VII.

GOD REMOVES UNHOLY PREJUDICES—A PERSONAL EXPERIENCE.

SEVERAL years after my conversion, A. S., an evangelist, whose revival labors in other places had been distinguished for their power and success, came to Chicago. He was not of our church connection, but strongly in harmony with its leading doctrines, especially in that of entire sanctification, which he preached intelligently and urgently. In Chicago he labored in several localities, and enjoyed the favor of many Christians, seemingly deserving it by his teachings and daily life.

At one of our afternoon missions, one of the brethren came to me with the story of a great sin committed by A. S. with a woman, an attendant upon his meetings. I was shocked, but hardly prepared to believe the scandalous report, for A. S. and myself had been intimate friends for months, and I had many reasons for doubting its truth. Before I left the mission-meeting that afternoon, however, one of the good pilgrim sisters repeated the scandal to me in regretful words.

I was pained, as well as shocked. The story might be

true, for who knew the weakness of humanity, unrestrained by grace, better than I did?—and the idea that A. S. had fallen was deeply impressed upon my mind. If true, the report had toppled him from a high place in my estimation; if not true, and his character as a Christian could be vindicated, who would rejoice more heartily than myself?

But I was cautious not to repeat the vile imputation of sin to any one. I should have gone to A. S. and told him what I had heard, in all kindness. This positive duty I neglected. So the scandal rankled in my bosom, with the natural effect of a half-belief in its truth, and a growing dislike of the man.

Months passed. I avoided A. S. If I met him in the street he always took me warmly by the hand, with a friendly greeting that I could not openly disdain. Still my lips were sealed concerning "the great transgression." If I ever mentioned him to other people, I merely said that I did not like him any more. It was strange how strongly my prejudice against him continued to increase. I could not bear to meet him anywhere. I did not hate him; I simply desired to avoid him as one with whom I could no longer associate in harmony. Once he had been invited to preach in our church, and I fled from the house before he opened his lips, so painful had his presence become to me. I make no excuses for my conduct or feelings—I describe the experience as it was.

I have said that I did not hate A. S. I believe that the least appeal to my sympathy or assistance in his be-

half, at that or any other time, would have received a prompt response. Had he done me, individually, a wrong, I could have freely forgiven him. I was only suffering from an intense mental prejudice, founded upon a possible disobedience of the laws of God, and which I had of myself no power to dispel. I think now that I made this prejudice on one or two occasions a subject of prayer, but not, perhaps, so often as I should have done.

After this sort of experience had continued for some months, at a period when my mind had not been unusually exercised over A. S., I laid me down to sleep one Saturday night, at peace with God and man. When I awoke on the following morning my thoughts turned toward A. S. To my great surprise and greater satisfaction, all my prejudice against him had been taken away during the night, and the old love and esteem for him as a Christian minister and friend had returned. How thankful I was that God had in this mysterious manner assured me of the innocence of A. S., and I greatly rejoiced over the divine vindication. That afternoon I sought A. S., and he then for the first time learned of the prejudice I had formed against him; to receive his forgiveness I had only to ask for it.

The lesson was worth heeding. It warned me against listening to scandals concerning Christian people unless the evidence is overwhelming; and I hope it may warn others not to repeat scandalous stories unless they are prepared conclusively to prove them.

CHAPTER VIII.

GOOD AND EVIL IN MEN—THE BENEFIT OF SOUND CONVERSION.

“OUR lives are two-fold,” wrote one of England’s distinguished poets; and unless we accept the doctrine of total and universal depravity of human nature, as set forth in the Bible, confessing with David, each one of us, “behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me” (Psalm li., 5), it is not easy to determine the causes or the partition lines of these vital distinctions.

For instance, suppose a child is born, one of whose parents is extremely pious, orderly and refined, while the other exhibits directly the opposite of all these characteristics. It is possible that the child may inherit many of the traits of both parents. In some cases the worst might be modified by the best; but it is possible that the possession of the two sets of propensities, where neither neutralizes the other, will cause the individual untold misery from the struggle that is constantly going on in the mind between these contrary peculiarities. The virtues of the mother (let us say) are constantly warring with the vices.

of the father for control of the mental and physical being, and as the child grows, his better nature may revolt at the grossness that he finds within himself. Happy is he who strives successfully to overcome the evil and maintain the good qualities manifested in himself.

The supposition, in this connection, that a man does not know when he is thinking, speaking or acting wickedly, is hardly probable (unless the wrong was done ignorantly); for the conscience, that mysterious monitor of the soul, is prompt to inform him at the moment of his transgression.

If the two natures are equally strong in the same person, the warfare between them becomes almost unbearable, and in this, undoubtedly, lies the cause of certain suicides. If the father has been a habitual drunkard, and the mother a pure woman all her life, the son will look upon drunkenness with disgust, should the mother-nature prevail in him, and *vice versa*.

Depravity, in some form, is inherent in all persons to a greater or less degree, and the influence which it has, not only upon individuals, but upon society, must be met by a purer and stronger influence, or crime will be the result. Hence reformatory measures of various kinds, without number, have been proposed, and failed because they originated in false theories, and were incompetent in practice. On one point all good men seem to agree, that crime should be both restrained and punished. The strictest Christian cannot consistently object to this theory; but most Christians believe that the pure religion of our Lord

Jesus Christ is the only instrumentality whereby the entire inward man can be changed from evil to good in its aspirations and manner of living. Philanthropists and philosophers, of every shade, have advised other methods, but it is lamentable to contemplate how these theories have proved inefficient with the masses, while it is encouraging to see the success with which individuals have risen from the lowest to a higher life. Personal conversion may therefore be more hopefully advocated than the wholesale reformation of a community by stringent laws, although wise legislation may effectually assist in weeding out evils that disgrace civilized society.

The maintenance of evil habits lies, measurably, with individuals, because they are either indifferent as to the consequences of their courses, or are averse to the trouble of entering upon reform, preferring to submit to the control of their grosser natures. The apostle Paul, in one of his epistles, describes his own condition before his conversion from Judaism to Christianity, for he says he found a law in his mind that he acknowledges to be good, but there was also an opposition in his members that would not yield to the mental requirement; but when he was thoroughly consecrated and sanctified, as he undoubtedly was afterward, being imbued with the spirit of Christ, he had no trouble in keeping his body in subjection to his changed will.

CHAPTER IX.

THE DIVINE SANCTION OF CHURCH ORGANIZATION.

WEBSTER'S Dictionary notes five definitions of the word "church," the first of which applies to the edifice in which Christian worship is publicly performed, and the last refers, generally, to "the aggregate of religious influences in a community, ecclesiastical authority, etc." The other three explanations of the word are as follows: (1.) "A formally organized body of Christian believers worshiping together." (2.) "A body of Christian believers, observing the same rights and acknowledging the same ecclesiastical authority," as the Methodist Church or other denomination. (3.) "The collective body of Christians, or of those who acknowledge Christ as the Saviour of mankind."

Cruden's Concordance presents the following definitions of the word "church," with the scriptural authority therefor: (1.) "A religious assembly selected and called out of the world by the doctrine of the gospel, to worship the true God in Christ, according to his word; 1 Corinthians i., 2, and Revelation ii., 7. (2.) All the elect of God of what nation soever, from the beginning to the end of

the world, who make but one body, whereof Jesus Christ is the head; Colossians i. 18. (3.) The faithful of some one family, together with such Christians as were wont to assemble with them for solemn worship; Romans xvi., 5, Colossians iv., 15, and Philemon 2. (4.) The faithful of some one province; 2 Thessalonians i., 1, 4, 5. (5.) The governors or representatives of the church; Matthew xviii., 17—that is to such rulers, to whom the censures of the church do of right belong, that by them it may be communicated to the whole society. (6.) A multitude of people assembled together, whether good or bad; Acts xix., 37. (7.) The congregation of the Jews, which were formerly the people and church of God; Acts vii., 38."

Edward Eggleston defines the word thus: "Whenever two or more persons agree to help each other to serve God, they form a church."

Jehovah organized the first church, by Moses, in the Wilderness of Sin, through whom, also, he proclaimed the code of laws governing the people, their modes of worship, etc.; Exodus xix.-xxxii.; also Leviticus i.-xxvii., and Deuteronomy i.-xxxiv. This church was reorganized at Jerusalem in the reign of King David, and perpetuated by King Solomon, under divine auspices; 1 Chronicles xv., xvi., and xvii., xxi., 28-30; xxii., xxiii., 24-32; xxiv., xxviii., 1-23; 2 Chronicles i.-viii.; also in the days of Nehemiah and Ezra, to which books of the Old Testament the reader is referred for particulars.

At the time when God first organized his church in the wilderness, he was their only Ruler, Moses being his

prime minister and Aaron his high-priest, so that there was but one people and one God; but after the people murmured against the theocracy and chose a king, however much the temporal government was changed, the divine organization of the church remained intact; and it is noticeable that as long as the people maintained their religious allegiance to God, no matter who was king, they were prosperous and protected, but when they turned away to worship idols, they soon fell into deep trouble. Yet God never wholly forsook them, notwithstanding their many rebellions against him. At the time of our Saviour's first coming, the temple worship, sadly degenerated into a multitude of empty ceremonies, from which true praise and worship had almost disappeared, was still in existence, "having a form of godliness without its power." The rejection of the promised Messiah, in the person of Jesus Christ, soon led to the destruction of the temple, and closed the Jewish dispensation with the wholesale slaughter of its adherents.

The first church under the Christian dispensation was organized by the Saviour when he appointed his twelve apostles and personal companions after a night spent in prayer; Luke vi., 12-16; Mark vi., 6-14. And when the church thus founded had sufficiently increased, through conversions, he chose seventy others to present his religion to the people; Luke x., 1-12. After his ascension, the church which he founded (during his three years' ministry in priest-ridden Jerusalem), numbered in that city about 120 souls, besides devout Jews from every nation under

heaven; Acts i., 15; ii., 5. But after the pouring out of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost, 3,000 converts were added to this number of our Lord's followers.

Subsequent to this manifestation of divine power the church was wonderfully strengthened; the disciples lost their fear of men and were fully inspired and fitted for a successful ministry. After they had preached the gospel for a brief season, the church was still further enlarged to such a degree that a more perfect organization became necessary; Acts vi., 1. The church labor then required a more complete division, and seven deacons, or stewards, were chosen to look after the poor Christians and provide for their temporal comfort, while the apostles continued their preaching, relieved from this hindering care; Acts vi., 1-7.

At this time the original eleven apostles, with Matthias, the successor of Judas Iscariot, constituted a board of bishops, having divine authority over the church. Then came Paul, the divinely chosen minister to the Gentiles, with Silas, both enjoying the personal friendship and protection of the Saviour; "and so mightily grew the word of God and prevailed." (Acts xix., 20.) And all this under the fiercest persecution of the unbelieving Jews. Indeed, it is generally admitted that before the close of the first century, under the guidance of the Holy Ghost and the faithful labors of the primitive church, the parting injunction of the Saviour to his disciples, to go into all that portion of the world known to be inhabited and preach the gospel to every creature, had been literally ful-

filled. So much for an organized church working for the salvation of souls under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost.

We say an *organized* church; for in Paul's two letters to Timothy we find the great apostle of the Gentiles laying down the rules that should govern, and the characteristics that should distinguish, godly ministers, bishops, elders and deacons as officers in the churches founded by the apostles, as well as the conduct of those over whom these officers were set.

As if any other evidence were needed that God did always, and does now, sanction church organizations to glorify himself and perpetuate his worship in spirit and in truth, we may refer the reader, also, to the messages from Christ to the seven apostolic churches in Asia Minor, sent by his "beloved disciple" John, when the latter was an exile in the isle of Patmos. What love, what rebukes, what warnings, did the Saviour proclaim in these wonderful epistles!—such interest in their welfare, such desire for their excellence, as only he himself could manifest for his loved, yet faulty ones whom he had purchased with his own precious blood.

Opposition is sometimes made to a specific religious creed by thoughtless and unbelieving persons. But the Christian religion is founded on obedience to God through faith in Christ and the enlightenment and sanctification of the Holy Ghost. That this faith should be concentrated and established upon a universal Christian creed, or unchanging statement of belief, is as reasonable as the adoption of any system of doing business.

Out on this carping, fault-finding spirit of the present day that murmurs against the organization of the true followers of the blessed Jesus for their better government and the promotion of gospel truth! Far better is it to lend a helping hand to these heaven-born churches and aid them in honoring God and bestowing comfort and peace in the Holy Ghost upon thousands of sin-sick souls.

Said the Saviour, on one occasion: "Whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me. But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depths of the sea."

If such is God's love and respect for *one* disciple, how great must be the value, in his eyes, of all those thousands who gather from time to time in public assemblies as organized worshipers to glorify his name.

CHAPTER X.

THE LIBERTY WHEREWITH CHRIST HAS MADE US FREE.

AN ordinary class of persons, many of whom are perhaps members of popular churches, can see no *freedom* in the lives of holy men and women.

They say: " You shut yourselves out from the world and the enjoyment that God has provided all around us. It was not always so. We remember when, like us, you shared in those enjoyments with the greatest zest. You could attend theatres, balls, concerts, and public celebrations, could wear rich clothing and jewelry, drink your social glass of ardent spirits, smoke your cigars, play cards and billiards, read novels, and fill up your time with a succession of pleasures that made life agreeable, and yourself one of the most genial companions in our social circle. Now you never take any pleasure in these things. You read only your Bible, and books and papers relating to it; you are a slave to your prejudices against the enjoyments and the friends that you once loved, and you deny yourself even the commonest recreations of human nature. Where, then, is your boasted freedom? You claim to be a free man in Christ Jesus, and tell us that whom the Son makes free, is free indeed. I cannot understand it."

These objections are easily met. One word that you have used explains it all—*re-creation*—the re-creation of human nature. One whom we love and honor because of his great love for us has told us—“ye must be born again”—re-created in the mind and spirit, changed from sinfulness into righteousness by the blood of Jesus Christ. Is this another mystery to you? Read the third chapter of John’s gospel prayerfully, asking for the wisdom of the just, and in *that* light shall ye see light. In that light and new creation the evanescent pleasures of life lose their value and become as worthless as a bubble in the air. The soul, in its new-born freedom, rises heavenward. All its thoughts, aspirations, inclinations, dispositions and desires have undergone a change. That change has but one object—to obey God and live in submission to his will. New motives, new enjoyments, and freedom from earth-born cares and anxieties, are some of the characteristics of the new creation. Is the man any less a man, or has he lost a single natural faculty? Not one. His constitutional traits remain, but are subdued and softened by God’s graces, and his personal freedom is unabated. He is at liberty, so far as his bodily faculties are concerned, to go and come as he pleases; to enter a saloon and call for drink; he knows the mystery of card-playing as well as he ever did; the theatre and the dancing hall are open to him as of old, and yet none of these things move him. They have lost their charm and influence over him. He can pass the saloon and pleasure-house without a regret. He knows their allurements, but he also knows their vanity.

and wickedness, and he turns from them with a sigh that others cannot see them as he now does.

The maiden in her youthful home gathers around her gentle delights carefully suited to her single condition, but when her future husband comes to claim her for his bride she cheerfully lays aside the ties and enjoyments that have hitherto bound her to home and its surroundings, and goes forth, hand in hand with her chosen one, to love, honor and obey him, and to be loved, cherished, supported and comforted by him. So with the sincere Christian. He is a portion of the trae church, the bride of Christ. All his thoughts and wishes are submissive to his Lord, and in the contemplation of his goodness, loving-kindness and purity, the past is buried out of sight, and the light and ecstacy of a new love takes possession of his soul. In this condition he enjoys the purest freedom. Casting all his cares, infirmities and mistakes upon the Lover of his soul, he walks with him in heavenly places that even the wealth, ambition and follies of the world cannot defile. In the word of his beloved Saviour he finds a great delight, but his bliss is greatest when he communies with Jesus in the privacy of his closet. "Being now made free from sin and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life." (Romans vi. 22.) Wherefore let us comfort one another with these words.

CHAPTER XI.

THE FALLACIES AND WICKEDNESS OF MODERN SPIRITUALISM
—A PERSONAL EXPERIENCE.

FOR those who are not familiar with the revelations of the Bible on the subject, it is difficult to determine why that unnatural, or preternatural, infatuation known as "modern spiritualism" is indorsed and accepted by many persons who profess to be intelligent beings, and invested with an importance that it does not in reality possess; and it is surprising with what readiness its proselytes fall into its questionable practices. If, as claimed, the counterpart of modern spiritualism has been in the past an element of social and religious life, it certainly never had so many followers as in the quarter-century just closed, nor were its teachings ever before so widely revered.

The "mission" of spiritualism, some three or four centuries ago, was to walk about o' nights and frighten not only children and nervous women, but to arouse the fears and superstitions of stalwart men. People did not then make bosom friends of disembodied spirits or demons, and gossip with them in a species of ecstatic delight. The ancient ghost, too, was reticent, and always came either to

denounce or warn somebody. Neither, then, did people harbor the idea that ghost-lore was good authority for shipwrecking their Christian faith and rejecting the atonement of Christ, as they do now; much more frequently, indeed, did they bring the weapons of the gospel and the church to bear upon their spiritual visitors and put them to flight.

But now the ghosts (demons) have become so numerous that many households have one, and so amiable are they as to overcome the fears and doubts of the living who put their trust in them. Instead of endeavoring to frighten to death the unhappy "medium" of their communications with blood-curdling stories, they now converse sweetly, deal in æsthetic philosophy, and give expression to weaker platitudes and stronger blasphemies than infidels in the flesh. And this is done in such a mysterious, soothing manner as to induce the infatuated listener to believe that they are talking common sense and religious truths.

But it is a serious fact, susceptible of proof, that since the advent of the "Rochester knockings," in 1848, spiritual communications, even when purporting to come from the greatest and best of the departed spirits of earth, have been unworthy of the intellect or moral excellence that the individuals exhibited while in the body. Occasionally a spirit-given lesson may resemble the teachings of its alleged author while living, but it is usually a poor imitation of his style, and nothing else.

Are we then to believe that a large proportion of mod-

ern men and women, while quite as curious as the people of the olden time, are weaker in intellect, though living in an age of far greater intelligence? If not, why do thousands believe that spiritualism is a source of wisdom, progress and consolation, and that it can benefit those who suffer themselves to be ensnared by its fascinating illusions? That it should influence any one to seek a better religion than that of Jesus Christ and him crucified, evidences carnality, mental distortion and fatal unbelief in the seeker.

By this time the reader has a right to ask, and perhaps a desire to know, why I entertain these opinions. My answer is, that several years ago, thinking there might be some hidden good in spiritualism, and having a curiosity to learn more of it, I suffered myself to develop into a "medium" in nearly every phase of the delusion, except "trance-speaking," as it is called. From this imbecility I was happily free. At first I was a "writing medium," afterward progressing to "spirit-sight," "spirit-hearing," and "spirit-vocalization," conversing freely with my supernatural companions on all subjects of interest to me, being under their control, and unable to deliver myself from the influence which they held over me; nor was there any human help for me. But after a long season of prayer, at the end of about three months, through the grace of him who, when on earth, cast out devils and restored the fallen, I was, to my great joy, freed from these unpleasant spirit-influences, coming out of the ordeal like the tormented man in the tombs of Gadara, "clothed and in my right mind," and very sound in body.

I came out of spiritualism, also, with a new and deeper faith in the Bible as God's own blessed revelation to mankind, a stronger belief in the divinity and atoning power of Christ, and a greater antipathy to sin—aye, a perfect horror of wickedness—than I had ever felt before. These benefits I still retain, and strive to cherish with jealous care. Why I was ever delivered from the bitterness of spiritualism by the power of God, and that alone, he only knows, unless it was that I might lift my voice in warning to others not to be ensnared by its delusions; and it is from a sense of gratitude to him and of duty to my fellow-creatures, that I here record my experience with this, one of the most subtle of Satan's devices to ruin souls, and my undying hostility to its power and teachings, and to all other doctrines that resist the spirit of Christianity.

I oppose modern spiritualism: Because it is expressly forbidden and denounced in the Bible, (where it is called "possessed of devils," "possessed of a spirit of divination," "having unclean spirits," etc.) under the titles of "doctrines of devils," "sorcery," "witchcraft," "familiar spirits," and others, in *Isaiah* viii., 19, 20; *xlvii.*, 9, 12; *xix.*, 3, 4; *Leviticus* xx., 6, 27; *Deut.* xviii., 10, 11; *1 Samuel* xv., 42; *1 Chron.* x., 13, 14; *2 Chron.* xxxiii., 6, 11; *2 Kings* xxiii., 24; *2 Thess.* ii., 9, 12; *Galatians* v., 26; *Rev.* xxi., 8.

Because it opposes the truth of the Bible and reviles its teachings.

Because it rejects the divine nature and mediatorial office of Jesus Christ.

Because it claims a probationary state after death.

Because it misleads its devotees to say and do many silly things.

Because no reliance can be placed on what the spirits say.

Because its phenomena are unsatisfactory and useless, and because (with other reasons) Jesus and his apostles drove legions of evil spirits out of the "mediums" of their day, restoring them to sanity and health.

CHAPTER XII.

THE SINNER'S POSITION IN THE SIGHT OF GOD AND BEFORE MEN.

THE committing of any known sin is the beginning of judgment. The consciousness of doing wrong is the first summons to the bar of God; and it seems almost impossible that any one should indulge in sin without knowing that he is transgressing, especially in these days when the light of God is streaming so vividly upon the earth. Such a human being is condemned already, for judgment is set against him in his own conscience, and he is become a self-accuser.

Added to the knowledge of his sinfulness before God is the torment experienced by the criminal in either fearing, or realizing, that some other person is aware of his transgression, and may at any time expose him to the authorities for punishment, or to the public for censure.

"But," objects some one, "many habitual sinners seem cheerful and unconcerned, and enjoy life, apparently, better than most pious people do." True, so it seems in frequent cases; and many do undoubtedly "roll sin as a sweet morsel under the tongue," but it is to them like the little book that the Apostle John ate in his glorious vision in the Isle of Patmos: "It was in my mouth sweet as honey, and as soon as I had eaten it, my belly was bitter." (Revelation x., 10.) It is folly to say that sinners do not "enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season," for the apostle (Heb. xi., 25,) plainly intimates that they do. Notice the case of David and Bathsheba. But when Nathan, the godly accuser, came, David felt that his sin would overwhelm and ruin him, and in great anguish he humbled himself before God; 2 Samuel xii.

Deep in the soul of every sinner, often smothered by continuous days and nights of dissipation, lies the germ of remorse, which, when the Spirit of God breathes upon it, begins to grow and spread its roots of bitterness through all the life of the man, and he either cries for mercy or seeks forgetfulness in self-murder. No relief, however, can be found in suicide, for after death comes the final judgment, from which there is no appeal, and mercy is forever cut off. Happy is he who, being convicted of sin by his conscience, flees to Jesus, the only Saviour, seeking pardon and peace for his soul.

A distinguished writer upon divinity says that God sends no one to hell, meaning thereby that the sinner is self-condemned, and that the last judgment will only con-

firm the sentence which conscience has already pronounced against him here.

Let no one think that sin can be a secret thing. The crimes that men commit are known to the All-seeing God, and there is reason for believing that Satan and other evil spirits know of them and fiendishly anticipate the sinner's future shame and misery. A friend once dreamed that he had committed an offence against God, as he thought, secretly, but while in the act he discovered a person watching him. "Oh," said he, "the torment of that moment! I felt not only keen remorse, but the dreadful bondage in which this witness held me. My character and all my future peace were in his keeping. If he chose he could ruin me by exposure, and I was helpless in his power." Fortunately he awoke very soon, happy and thankful that it was only a dream, praying with the psalmist, "Cleanse thou me from secret faults." (Psalm xix., 12.) From the terrible reality of such dreams may God ever keep us all!

Thus we see that judgment begins in this life, in the awakening of conscience, the anguish of remorse, the accusations of men, and the punishment of crime by human laws. Unless true repentance and salvation come in time, death will inevitably bring the sinner to the judgment-seat of God, without a hope of reprieve; and then, self-condemned, he must take up his everlasting abode with fiends, never again to be free for a single moment from the deepest misery. See Matthew xxv., 30-46.

But if, on the other hand, conscience leads the sinner

to a sincere repentance, earnestly seeking mercy for his past wickedness, accepting the free pardon of God as a priceless gift from the Lord Jesus Christ, and living afterward in newness of life, the law of God will lose all its terrors; there is no more condemnation if he lives after the teachings of the Spirit and not after those of the flesh (Romans viii., 1), and he looks forward to the final judgment as his coronation day, when his Saviour shall place upon his head a crown of everlasting life and invest him with an eternal weight of glory. Let us each be wise in time.

CHAPTER XIII.

HEAVEN AND HELL—UNSCRIPTURAL DOCTRINES.

APPARENTLY the first effort of a soul which is seeking to stifle its convictions of sin, instead of striving for a full and gracious pardon from its offended Maker, is to ignore the existence of hell as a place of future punishment for the wicked, and to attack the doctrine of the eternal misery of unrepentant sinners. To do this the convicted soul must cast away, or misconstrue (often against light), the commonly accepted revelation of God, rejecting the fact of the Almighty's justice, giving him credit for an indiscriminate mercy which he does not claim (Exodus xxxiv., 4-8), and perverting the ordinary meaning of the words "eternal" and "everlasting" into something of less duration. We never find these men objecting to the doctrine of an

everlasting heaven on grounds similar to those on which they found their arguments against the everlasting punishment of sinners. And yet, in view of the great and undeniable division of mankind into good and evil beings, with the privilege of choosing for themselves which they will be, it must be soundly logical to assert that one portion of our race shall be forever happy, and the other forever miserable, or else the reasoning of the philosophers in favor of virtuous lives loses much of its importance. As well might we expect to find two parallel lines crossing each other, as to conceive any union of good and evil, in their being or effect, here or hereafter. Let modern philosophers be as honest as *Aesop*, and they will be safer as theologians.

The better philosophy of the Christian religion acknowledges the existence of an eternal hell, and then helps men to avoid it; for it is a fact which no skeptic can refute, that with a knowledge of the Bible (as representing God's will toward mankind), and the enlightening influence of the Holy Ghost to help us, no human being need go to hell, or fear any other painful result of God's justice. The Lord's will is to keep every one of us from final destruction by leading us to forsake those things that will surely cast us into it. He can never love evil, nor suffer his holiness to mingle with it. Consequently men full of sin cannot go and dwell in his presence in heaven, even if they would. It would be a place of torment to them, for in its clear and holy light their sense of guiltiness would overwhelm them.

Our choice lies between heaven and hell for our everlasting abiding place. Only holiness can dwell in the first, while sinners are by their natural depravity and wicked lives prepared to inhabit the other; for "it the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the sinner and the ungodly be found?" But the regenerate soul no more fears hell than men in their senses fear the fiery furnaces in our manufactories. They know that if they leap into them they will perish; if they keep away from them they receive no harm. On the contrary, the soul in its natural state is in the condition of an insane man, who dances heedlessly upon the edge of one of these furnaces until he is overcome by its vapors, and is drawn helplessly into it.

The men who do not believe in a hell are those who do not believe the Bible. Nowhere else is hell so plainly revealed as in the holy scriptures. Nowhere else is heaven so truthfully described. Nowhere else can men so unerringly learn the paths that lead to each of these abodes. To reject the doctrine of a hell is to reject God; to reject God is to be shut out of heaven forever. •

CHAPTER XIV.

THE SUNDAY-SCHOOL.—ITS GOOD WORK AND BEST GOVERNMENT.

WHETHER we call it a Sunday-school or a Sabbath-school may seem an unimportant question, but it is hardly correct to designate a school that is taught on the *first* day of the week by a name that indicates its operations on the seventh. "Names are nothing," it is said, but there is truth and fitness in calling it a Sunday-school.

The remarkable increase and improvement of the Sunday-school work in this country during the last century is cheering to every Christian heart. It has also given rise to numerous theories and experiments concerning the most effectual manner in which these schools should be conducted. Without doubt, these efforts have had their origin in a sincere desire to do good in the most excellent way; but it has required the exercise of patience, and much skill, to harmonize the ideas of the many and unite upon the most practical and useful methods of instruction.

Children must be attracted to the school and interested in its duties, as well as instructed while there. Teachers

ought to be fond of children by nature, possessing intelligence spiritually, with a knowledge of Bible truths and history, and a fair share of common sense and secular learning. If they are also meek and loving followers of the Lord Jesus Christ, they will be better able to appreciate and work for the results to which all Sunday teaching should tend—the engrafting of the tender branches upon the true Vine.

We may well doubt the advantage to be gained by encumbering our work with the arbitrary rules which govern every-day schools. Strict discipline may be necessary under certain circumstances; but the Sunday-school work is purely a labor of love, and the officers or teachers who are unable to control their own spirits or the little ones intrusted to their care without resorting, habitually, to harshness, are not fitted for their positions.

Love and gentleness, a blindness to the little faults of the scholars, with earnestness and simplicity of thought and language, and an humble reliance upon God's Holy Spirit for guidance, will go farther to win hearts for teachers, and souls for Christ, than all the efforts of those who depend for their success upon austere regulations. If we make the school attractive by our own cheerfulness and patience, by affection and kindness, by songs of praise, by earnest and plain prayers which the youngest may understand, it will be a pleasure for children to come regularly and participate in the exercises.

The Sunday-school should really be the children's own church—how few care to attend any other!—the vestibule

by which they may enter into the courts of the adult church of Christ. Loved for its own sake, and for the spiritual and innocent attractions with which it may be invested, it will need no expensive libraries of fictitious stories, or costly "rewards of merit." A scholar may be so interested for an hour in the actual operations of the school, and the spirit manifested in its machinery, as to become indifferent to the other attractions of a doubtful character that are sometimes brought into requisition to increase the interest and attendance. We would not, however, oppose the introduction and regular distribution of some of the many excellent Sunday-school papers, adapted to the capacities of all scholars, which may be so cheaply supplied every Sunday. The ordinary contributions of the school from week to week are generally sufficient, without much urging, to obtain them. They inspire the young with a desire to read, and may lead them to pursue more important studies, besides inculcating moral and religious sentiments that, with the heavenly blessing, will never be obliterated from their memories, and may serve to draw other and older hearts to the Saviour.

We would have the opening exercises of the school of such a character that children of all ages may enjoy them, and be taught thereby to pray and sing intelligently, and in the spirit of true devotion and praise. Then we would suggest that the lesson of the day be brought within the scope of the scholars' intellects in a manner to enlarge their understanding and increase their knowledge. Then we would have the application of its spiritual truths made

brief, cautionary, tender and earnest, as Christ taught

We know that it requires study and labor, and, perhaps, experience on the part of the teacher, to accomplish all this; but it is God's work, and we believe that all teachers in Sunday-schools should let their interest in it find expression in sincere prayer, daily, for the renewal of their own spiritual strength and the salvation of the souls entrusted to their care.

In some schools, undoubtedly, it is difficult to obtain efficient teachers. With all the care and energy displayed by our superintendents there is almost always a vacancy to be supplied, either temporarily or permanently, and the demand often exceeds the supply. It is not because there are no competent persons in the churches whose duty it is to volunteer as teachers, but too frequently there is a calm indifference, and sometimes an undue diffidence, either of which dispositions may prevent able men and women from offering their services. This is not as it should be, and it is a little remarkable that intelligent and pious people will suffer any light impediment to keep them (circumstances permitting) from engaging in this pleasing and momentous work.

Sunday-school teachers know, from experience, what are the requirements and sum of their Sunday work. They know that it demands a large amount of self-denial, punctuality, zeal and application, not to say a total consecration of themselves to God. It also requires that they shall elevate the minds of the children from their everyday existence to a contemplation of holy things; show

them the sacred origin, purpose and character of the scriptures; convince them of the abounding sinfulness of unconverted human beings, and their consequent separation from the love and blessing of God, with the certainty of punishment, here or hereafter, if they disobey his laws; reveal the story of the cross of Christ—that “old, old story,” ever new—as their only means of regaining the favor of God; teach them his goodness and the rich results which will flow to them through their reconciliation to him and their desire for his glory manifested in obedient lives; urge them to seek for a closer union and peace with him by praying for the continual favor and mediation of the Saviour, who, in his human form and priestly office, is sitting at the right hand of his Father to turn aside deserved judgments and bestow upon them help and comfort here, with the hope of a joyous and eternal existence beyond the grave.

There will be times when the teachers' work will seem to them tedious and unprofitable; but if they are faithful the result rests in the hand of God; only the responsibility of doing and praying is theirs. The darkest day before their classes may be bringing light and peace to their own souls. Let them “strive to enter in at the strait gate” themselves, and endeavor to lead their scholars with them. Then they will have done their duty.

Returning to the practical government of the Sunday-school, and taking the ground that “order is heaven's first great law,” and that any school must suffer in proportion as that law is disregarded, the necessity of a knowledge

of whatever appertains to such an institution becomes apparent. It is true that Sunday-schools may be made prosperous and useful, spiritually, even though no sort of a record is kept of their routine proceedings, but as a part of the church's work the school derives stability from the character of the facts and figures that mark its weekly progress.

The information concerning a school that will most interest those connected with it and the church to which it belongs, relates to the number, regularity of attendance and punctuality of the scholars; the number, names and attendance of the officers and teachers; the facilities for study which it possesses; its ability to sustain itself by the voluntary offerings of those who attend it; the help that it is enabled to bestow on other Sunday-schools and missionary enterprises; the methods used to keep the classes continually filled; the dates of the admission and departure of scholars, teachers and officers, with their respective places of residence; the hour of opening the school and the length of its session; the number of minutes devoted to an examination of each lesson; the character of the other exercises, such as praying, singing, etc., and by whom conducted; the size and value of its library, if there is one; the number of Sunday-school periodicals and lesson-papers distributed, and how often; the amount of each Sunday's contributions, and for what purposes they were expended, and, finally, the number and names of those connected with the school who have been converted and united with the church.

With these things, and such other matters as may be suggested from time to time, the managers of the school should be familiar. If the superintendent and his assistant cannot, when required, furnish all the information set down in the foregoing summary, the secretary and treasurer should be able to answer correctly as to the rest. In large schools, especially, these things should be made matters of record rather than of tradition.

Almost every school has a method of its own for keeping its records. There is, however, a close similarity in their various reports. Printed class-books and record-books can be readily obtained at most of the religious bookstores for a small sum, or an intelligent secretary can easily manufacture one to suit his purpose out of a quire of letter-paper. The teachers are capable of rendering important assistance to the secretary by imparting to him definite information every Sunday, such as the names and residences of new scholars; the transfer of scholars from class to class; the removal of any from the school or neighborhood; the death of teachers or scholars, etc.; and this, as a rule of the school, should be rigidly enforced. The superintendent, also, is expected to announce to the school any important changes or other information. All scholars over six years old should be encouraged to seek out and bring in new scholars, and to report to the secretary anything that they may deem interesting to the school. In this personal confidence he would become better acquainted with them, and his records might be kept more perfectly. Teachers sometimes neglect to report in detail.

The use of keeping these records is found in their exhibition of the business and progress of the school from week to week and from year to year; to show who belong to it, and what they are doing to aid in establishing the kingdom of heaven upon earth.

CHAPTER XV.

SPIRITUAL POVERTY TYPIFIED BY THE HISTORY OF THE JEWS.

THE symbolism of the Bible is by no means its least remarkable feature. In the dealings of God with his chosen people, the Jews, in their obedience and disobedience, and with his enemies and theirs, have been handed down to us some of the truest and most noteworthy parallels of his mercies toward the disciples of our Lord Jesus Christ, and his judgments declared against his opposers.

Among the symbolic incidents and events of the past, foreshadowing certain circumstances and conditions in the church of these latter days, are those connected with the history of the ark of the covenant. This sacred chest, or divine treasury, was planned by God himself (Exodus xxv., 10-22), and built under his direction as a standing memorial of his goodness and mercy to Israel. So grandly did he hallow it that whenever the tabernacle rested its place was in the holy of holies, and such guards and protections were thrown around it while going from place to place that its sacredness could not be willfully profaned.

without bringing the severest punishment upon the offender.

In our version of the scriptures we are indebted to St. Paul (Hebrews ix., 4) for a description of the contents of this sacred treasury. The golden pot of manna signified the remembrance of God's preserving care, the incentive to a lively gratitude on the part of his people; Aaron's rod that budded shadowed forth Israel's prosperity so long as they obeyed Jehovah, and the two tables of the law were the rule of life for all who trusted in him; while the golden censer, not in the ark, but waved before it, manifested the chosen incense, typifying that more acceptable incense of praise that goes up to God from every loving, obedient heart.

We need not trace out in detail the vicissitudes through which the ark of the covenant passed; its unhallowed transition from the tabernacle to the battlefield; its capture by the Philistines; the evils that it brought upon them; their willingness to return it to Israel; its attempted removal to Jerusalem by King David; its fatal profanation by Uzzah; the blessings that it brought to the house of Obededom; its removal to David's tabernacle, and its final placing in Solomon's temple.

Turning now to 1 Kings viii., 5-9, we find that at this latter date, "there was nothing in the ark save the two tables of stone which Moses put there at Horeb, when the Lord made a covenant with the children of Israel."

Following out the typical illustration of the ark and its contents, we are led to observe (1) the times of Israel's prosperity, thanksgiving and piety as manifested in the

golden censer, the golden pot of manna and Aaron's rod that budded; and (2) the miserable condition of Israel at the first coming of our Saviour, typified by the condition of the ark when Solomon deposited it in his holy of holies. Then the prosperity of Israel had faded away, and its neck was under the foot of the Roman empire; the praise and thanksgiving had died out of its heart and was not found upon its tongue, and there was nothing left except the cold, hard tables of the law, a formal obedience, devoid alike of life and pious devotion. In vain the Son of God, the promised Saviour, came to offer the Jews spiritual freedom and restoration by the substitution of the glorious covenant of grace for the galling yoke under which the law was holding them in hopeless bondage. In vain he came to proclaim liberty to the captive, to bind up the broken-hearted, and to preach good tidings to the meek. On every hand he was rejected, despised, forsaken and persecuted, and he left them to bear the rigor of the law when he sent his messengers to destroy them in the bloody siege of Jerusalem.

Coming down to our own age, at a time when the faithful followers of the risen Lord are again watching and waiting for his glorious appearing to execute the direst judgment upon his enemies, it may be well to examine the contents of *our* ark of the covenant; to see if the world with its pleasures and vices has not robbed the Christian church on earth of its golden censer, its pot of manna, and its budding rod, and has left it nothing but the two tables of the law and a fearful looking for of judgment when the

Lord shall come. Shall he find faith in the earth any more than he did in Israel at his first coming? Shall he find submission, praise, thankfulness, love, zeal and joyous obedience in the hearts of his professed followers; or will the tares have so invaded his church on earth that the wheat shall have all withered away?

Thank God, he has a few names in other places besides Sardis which have not defiled their garments, and they shall walk with him in white, for they are worthy.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE STABILITY OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION CONSIDERED.

THE question is sometimes suggested to intelligent but unsanctified minds, in view of the great prevalence of vice in society, and even in the churches, whether the Christian religion is not a failure. The answer is very plain, and may be easily understood by all.

Christianity, in theory and practice, can only be a failure so far as men individually are concerned. It offers a full and complete salvation for every person in the world and can only fall short of its object when any one refuses to accept it. Let no one say that its requirements are either too rigorous or too simple, (and both of these charges have been brought against it;) for those who embrace it find it neither too hard nor too easy if they are in earnest and determined to be Christians through life and in death.

God has done all that he can to save sinners—all that his justice or mercy suggests. He requires nothing that his followers cannot perform. It is true that the covenant is strict in its terms, yet love formed it, and love will not only carry out God's part of it, but will help those who accept it to accomplish their duties, even to the very end, through every command, every trial, temptation and affliction—through prosperity and adversity.

Such is God's right to all our praise and worship, so great his power and goodness. so dependent are we upon him, that he may justly demand of us a strict obedience; and so he has made many great and precious promises to encourage us, and has also provided a certain way in which we may love, honor and obey him in every vicissitude of life. Fail he cannot, and fail we ought not, for every failure to serve him only makes bad worse and evil judgments surer. The Lord Jesus Christ is the way, the truth, and the life, and we may walk with him every day in newness of life and evermore rejoicing, because, if we desire it, he will abide with us here on earth and we with him here and hereafter, *forever.*

CHAPTER XVII.

BIBLE HOLINESS—THE REQUIREMENTS OF GOD'S LAW CONCERNING IT.

THE ten commandments (Exodns xx., 1-17) were written by the finger of God upon tables of stone and delivered to the people of Israel for the government of mankind, and to be *obeyed*. They have never been repealed or annulled, and are quite as much in force to-day as when they were first published. All moral and religious persons recognize their excellency and necessity. Our Saviour said he came not to destroy the law, and no man has ever dared, when governments for civilized people were being formed, to blot them out; so that the spirit of them has yet a place in the laws of nations.

As surely, too, as these commandments were spoken by the God of Israel and retain their controlling power, so must we consider these passages from God's law as still binding upon mankind: "For I am the Lord your God; ye shall therefore sanctify yourselves, and ye shall be holy." (Levities xi., 44, 45; xx., 7, 8.) So Christ prayed for his followers: "Sanctify them through thy truth. . . . And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that

they also might be [truly] sanctified through the truth." (John xvii., 17, 19, and marginal reading.)

Holiness, or sanctification, is believed to be perfection in religion. So our Saviour commanded his people: "Be ye therefore *perfect*, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." (Matthew v., 48.)

Notice the high standard of this perfection, God himself being the example or pattern of holiness: "Ye shall be holy, for I, the Lord your God, am holy." (Leviticus xix., 2.) No one can dispute the perfect holiness of God, the source of all Christian graces. So Peter wrote to the Christian strangers, (1 Peter i., 15, 16:) "As he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation. Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy." No one can doubt the perfect holiness of Christ, the best Friend and Saviour of men: "For whom he [God] did foreknow he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that *he* might be the first-born"—or the pattern—"among many brethren." (Romans viii., 29.) Speaking of Jesus, John wrote in his First Epistle, ii., 6: "He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also to walk even as he walked"—that is, in holiness. Again: "For such a high priest" (as Christ) "became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens." (Hebrews viii., 26.) "For even hereunto were ye called; because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example that ye should follow his steps; who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth." (1 Peter ii., 21, 22.)

Here, then, we have the scriptural warrant for holiness. 1. The command to be holy. 2. The desire of Jesus that his disciples should be sanctified (separate, or set apart, from sin), and his prayers that they may be made holy. 3. The standards of Christian perfection found in God the Father, and his well-beloved Son. 4. The example of Christ on earth.

Are the standards too high for human attainment? "With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible." (Matthew xix., 26.) "If we walk in the light as he [God] is in the light"—the light of revealed truth—"we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from ALL sin." It is God's work, not ours.

Let us now examine the methods of seeking and obtaining this perfection of Christian character: It is a work of the Holy Spirit. (John xvi., 7-15, and Acts i., 1-8, and ii., 38-39.) The word of God aids in the work. (2 Timothy iii., 16, 17.) It is a manifestation of God's grace. (Titus ii., 11-14.) Man's part in the work of obtaining Christian perfection is described in Romans vi., 1-7, 12-14, and 22; and viii., 1-17. Also in 2 Corinthians vi., 14-18; and vii., 1.

The effect of this perfection of Christian character is to make regenerated men so like God that they come to love whatever he loves, including all created beings, and to hate nothing but sin, for that is the only thing in all his great universe that God seems to hate. In nothing else does he so require us to resemble him as in these particulars,

and in nothing else can we so nearly approach his perfection. When men and women are in this condition, his mercy and goodness can be reflected in their lives, and his grace can better perform its perfect work in them, in cross-bearing, patience and submission to his holy will. This is the fulfillment—"Love is the fulfilling of the law"—the spirit of the Saviour's command to be "perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect." "Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children, and walk in *love* as Christ also hath loved us." (Ephesians v., 1, 2.) "Walk as children of light....proving what is acceptable unto the Lord," (verses 8, 10.) "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance; against such there is no law. And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh, with the affections" (or passions) "and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also *walk* in the Spirit." (Galatians v., 22-25.)

The subject is a prolific one; but these proof-texts may help some soul to seek that "holiness without which no man shall see the Lord." Clean hearts and right spirits are what Christians need, and they are the heritage of all who will earnestly seek for them in God's appointed way.

CHAPTER XVIII.

OBEDIENCE THE ONLY WAY TO HEAVEN—THE NATURE OF
TRUE OBEDIENCE.

THE vision of Jacob's ladder, reaching from earth to heaven, (Genesis xxviii., 10-16), with the angels ascending and descending upon it, suggests the possibility of communication between God and man, and the ministry of angels in obedience to the divine will.

The theme opens the way for a few instructive reflections upon the prevailing idea, and meditations upon the methods by which we, too, as by a ladder, may rise from sin and death to heaven, purity and eternal life.

Standing in our "lot," or that station of life in which it has pleased God to place us as individuals, we may contemplate the position which each of us occupies toward God. If we have not yet been converted, we have not attained the first round of the spiritual ladder that lifts men above the world and leads them up to the realms of the blest. A glimpse of the glory of heaven is granted to us; we desire to reach that beautiful home; and we begin to climb the ladder.

The first step to be taken is repentance for past offences

against God and man. We are now upon the first round of our Jacob's ladder. By faith in Jesus Christ as our Saviour, we mount the next step heavenward, and obtain forgiveness of sin. After that, we receive the help of the Holy Spirit, and our ascent progresses through all the graces of obedience to God, devotion and prayer, love to God and man, hope that maketh not ashamed; upward and onward in the apostolic excellencies of virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness and benevolence, and the fruits of the Spirit, such as meekness, goodness, gentleness, long-suffering, peace and joy, ending in eternal purity and the glory of the heavenly mansions purchased for us by the precious blood of Jesus, which he has gone to prepare for those who love him.

All these graces and virtues by which we thus ascend to heaven are but continuations of the fifth round of the ladder—obedience to God, without which all our progress heavenward must fail. It is the one great virtue to be secured; it rests upon our faith in Christ; it paves the way to all other spiritual gifts, and is the surest passport to God's favor here and hereafter.

“Looking unto Jesus” as “the author and finisher of our faith,” trusting in him as our Saviour and our strength, casting no “longing, lingering look behind,” as Lot’s wife did toward the Sodom she had left, we may go boldly forward in our pilgrimage to a better world. If we travel patiently up these rounds of the ladder, sustained as they are on either hand by the mercy of God our Father, and the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, we cannot fail. As we

progress from day to day, having the presence and the example of the angels of God to encourage us, we shall learn new lessons of self-denial and obedience; and we cannot fall, however great the height we gain, if we cling to the ladder, for the everlasting and almighty arms of divine love are under us for our protection. No matter how darkly the clouds of temptation and tribulation may gather before us to obscure our desired haven from our view, we may still go onward, walking not by sight but by faith, and in the joy of a perfect obedience.

Obedience to the will and commandments of God is the spirit of the Christian religion. Men may perform the most solemn ceremonies of devotion in private or in public assemblages, may outwardly manifest a disposition to serve God, and yet live in constant disobedience toward him. Call to mind the case of Saul, the king of Israel, who was sent by the divine command to destroy the Amalekites and all their possessions, and yet brought home with him droves of oxen and flocks of sheep which he had captured from his enemies. To the rebuke of the prophet Samuel for thus disobeying God, Saul replied that he had saved these animals to be offered in sacrifice by the Israelites; and it was then that Samuel gave utterance to this significant sentence: "Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams." (1 Samuel xv., 22.)

The conversion of a soul from sin is clearly shown by a change in the life of the individual, and by a desire to

do the whole will of God, whatever may be the consequences to business or personal comfort. Selfishness and self-will are taken away. God is to be henceforth obeyed, and the heart, the mind, and the body, are all to be brought into subjection to this one principle, this one desire.

Obedience is submission to the ruling power, whether it be good or evil. If the heart is right toward God, the tendency will be to obey his word, rather than the promptings of Satan or wicked men, and the life will be shaped accordingly. If the evil influences are the most potent, or the individual is in harmony with them, there can be no reform until the heart is regenerated, and the evil propensities are removed.

The example of Christ in respect to his submission and consequent obedience is shown to us in various portions of the New Testament, but nowhere so forcibly as during his agony in the garden of Gethsemane, when he uttered that memorable prayer, "Not my will, but thine, be done."

Obedience takes two forms—the voluntary, like that of Christ and his true followers—and the involuntary, like that which leads the robber or murderer to respect the laws of the land lest he be imprisoned or hanged if he violates them. The first sort performs every duty, and refrains from everything that is evil, cheerfully, willingly and patiently; while the other is fearful, slavish and sullen. The first is the disobedience of angels and saints, joyful in its performance and pleasing in the sight of God; the other

is that of devils and of men who delight in sin while they know its consequences.

Thus the obedience of Christians is voluntary, based on gratitude and love to God the Father for his mercy and loving-kindness, to Jesus for his power and willingness to save them, and to the Holy Ghost for his sanctifying, enlightening and comforting influences. There is nothing slavish or fearful in such obedience, for love is its motive, and glory its reward.

The effect of true and voluntary obedience to God is manifested in every station and relation of life, for it brings men, women and children into proper subjection to parents, teachers, magistrates and rulers, so that whoever is obedient to God is a good child, a good parent, a good friend and neighbor, and a good citizen.

The natural heart cannot comprehend the blessedness of such obedience. Nothing but the salvation of Christ and his grace can bring the individual into a proper subjection, and make him a partaker of the heavenly joys which crown the obedient here and hereafter. Therefore, it behooves every sinner to consider his ways and be wise in time.

CHAPTER XIX.

WARNINGS AND JUDGMENTS—HOW GOD CALLS SINNERS TO REPENTANCE.

IT has been remarked that our Saviour, in his teachings while on earth, frequently drew important lessons from his surroundings, the peculiarities of visible scenery, or the common incidents and events of human life. The sacred record bears sufficient proof of his ability to present most wholesome truths by these simple illustrations. As one example, let the reader turn with us to the first five verses of the thirteenth chapter of Luke's gospel.

Regarding the incident related in the first verse, commentators have disagreed as to the event and the time of its occurrence. Several surmise that the Galileans mentioned were "possibly the followers of Judas of Galilee, who, some twenty years before this, taught that Jews should not pay tribute to the Romans, and of whom we learn (Acts v., 37,) that he drew after him a multitude of followers, who, on his being slain, were all dispersed. About this time that party would be at its height, and if Pilate caused this detachment of them to be waylaid and put to death as they were offering their sacrifices at one

of their festivals, that would be ‘mingling their blood with their sacrifices.’” (Rev. David Brown’s Commentary.) Mr. John Wesley, in his notes on this passage, says more positively: “Some of the followers of Judas Gaulonitas absolutely refused to own the Roman authority. Pilate surrounded and slew them while they were worshiping in the temple at a public feast.”

Concerning the other event, the disaster at Siloam, mentioned by our Saviour in the same connection (verse 4), neither Josephus nor any other historian of those times refers to it. In that age the newspaper was unknown, and the information had probably been passed from mouth to mouth until it became public intelligence. It was undoubtedly a correct version of the catastrophe.

From both of these events our Saviour drew the same lesson (verses 3 and 5); and from that moment all generations have been taught, (1) that the crimes and casualties of every-day life are not necessarily instruments of God’s displeasure, and (2) that it behooves all persons, young and old, to be ready at all times to die, however sudden the summons may be.

At the time of the great Chicago fire, in 1871, numerous well-meaning people hastily pronounced it a judgment of God upon the inhabitants of the city for their wickedness. Inasmuch as the destruction was general, involving the ruin of churches, schools and Christian homes, as well as of theatres, drinking-saloons and gambling-rooms, it is difficult to agree with them in this wholesale denunciation.

So in other public calamities, men have misjudged the Lord, and attributed to his wrath what was simply a hidden operation of his Providence—a measure of goodness that eventually resulted in a blessing to the world.

In looking back 1850 years to the incidents related in the designated passage of the gospel, may we not make the same use of them that our Saviour did, and pronounce them—as we also may the great Chicago fire—not judgments, but warnings to the impenitent?

To the Jews who heard him on that occasion he gave the solemn warning, “ Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.” To this impressive caution they gave no heed, but continued in their sins. “ There was,” says Mr. Wesley, “ a remarkable resemblance between the fate of these Galileans and of the main body of the Jewish nation, the flower of which were slain at Jerusalem by the Roman sword, while they were assembled at one of their great festivals. And many thousands of them perished in the temple itself, and were literally buried in its ruins.”

Our Saviour spoke to men of Galilee and Jerusalem, and the Greek version of the passage implies that all those of Galilee and Jerusalem who despised his gospel should perish in their sins. The bloody work of Pilate in the temple was a warning to them. So was the falling of the tower at Siloam also a warning. Whether the victims of the slaughter and the crumbling building were doomed to everlasting joy or misery he did not tell them. But from their fate came his sharp monition—“ Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish ! ”

The loss of human life, especially by sudden disaster, is a fearful subject for contemplation, however lightly we may regard it in these busy and thoughtless days. It means a great deal to those who die. It means everlasting felicity with Christ and his redeemed ones in heaven, or eternal misery in hell with the devil and his angels. So the Bible declares. It means that the day of probation, during which men may repent of their sins and make their peace with God, has gone by; and too often the bitter wail comes up from the untimely grave, "the harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved!" This is the lesson that our Saviour sought to teach the multitude who heard him on this occasion—" Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish!"

When Nineveh had incurred God's displeasure, he sent Jonah to give the people notice of the impending destruction of the city. The warning was heeded, the people repented, and the city was saved.

So Christ, like Jonah, sounded, time and again, a similar warning to the Jews at Jerusalem; but the vail was upon their hearts, and their eyes were blinded with their Pharisaical self-righteousness, so that the warning fell upon ears that would not hear—upon thorny and stony ground.

Thus, also, does his blessed gospel—his warnings, promises and beautiful lessons of life—fall dead upon the ears and the hearts of the children of this generation. The poet who said, "we find mankind the same in every age," well depicted the depravity of the human heart, which in

all ages rejects the joy and blessedness of eternal life by sacrificing itself upon the altar of selfishness and unbelief.

Do men find fault with God for requiring them to enter heaven by the Door, instead of climbing into its sacred precincts by some other way? Then their hearts are in rebellion against him; they have not on the wedding garment, and if they are thrust into outer darkness forever, they have no one to blame but themselves. The Christian heart is pained when it contemplates the condition of millions of souls, and cries out in agony, "Oh, if men would only submit themselves to the wisdom and mercy and goodness of God as willingly as they do to the allurements and dominion of the world, the flesh and the devil, what a different—what a glorious place our earth would be!"

Does some one inquire: "Could not God have contrived some other way of saving men than by repentance, faith in Christ, and continual obedience to his will?" To which the Christian replies, "Undoubtedly he could. But it may be strongly doubted whether men would have been more willing to be saved in any other manner than God might require and good men approve."

We can readily believe that in a moment, as quickly as Jesus turned water into wine at the wedding-feast in Cana, God could change all ardent spirits, all intoxicating drinks, into water, and burn all the breweries and distilleries with fire from heaven, and so put an end to the outward effects of drunkenness in men. But would they be less drunkards at heart than they are now? Would not

thousands curse God and die under the burning of their unappeased appetites for intoxicating liquors? Would they be less wicked in any respect? Many, no doubt, would rejoice to see the utter impossibility of becoming inebriated again under such a divine ruling, but would there be any less profanity, falsehood or murder in their hearts than there was before? Surely God's present way of saving drunkards is the best—to destroy the appetite for ardent spirits in the man and leave the intoxicating cup in existence; to cleanse the heart and fill it with better aspirations, so that the decanter and the roystering companions shall become abominations in his sight, as in the sight of God.

God has written it plainly, as in letters of fire, in his word, "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish," and "Ye must be born again." "Flesh and blood"—with their corruptions—"cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven." How forcibly these warnings should reach the sinner's ears and awaken his conscience! Then will God's Holy Spirit show him his vileness, make him feel the burden of his iniquity, and urge him to flee to the Saviour, and so escape from the wrath to come. The transgressor cannot safely trust in any other course. He may eat and drink to-day, but to-morrow he must die. How unwise, then, for him to wait until disaster or illness cuts him off in his sins! "To-day the Saviour calls;" to-morrow may be too late.

CHAPTER XX.

THE BIBLE AS AN EDUCATOR IN OUR PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

THE United States professes to be a Christian nation. If such is the case, and Christianity has for its purpose an aggressive warfare upon everything that is evil, either in high or low places, it is perfectly proper, we believe, to discuss the vexed question, "Shall the Protestant Bible be read daily, without note or comment, in our public schools?" This problem may not be solved until God shall decide it.

Objections to this use of the holy scriptures are urged exactly as they are advanced against every orthodox work and doctrine throughout the world, and have their origin either in bigotry or skepticism. Therefore believers in all Protestant creeds have a direct interest in the question, and must answer to their consciences another interrogation: "Do we not dishonor God and deny our own faith when we oppose the daily reading of the Bible in our public schools?"

So much good has been done, and is being done, by the free use of the Bible throughout the length and breadth of this and other lands, that Christians have cause to be

greatly comforted and encouraged. In Germany, for many generations, the study of the Bible—not a mere cursory reading of it, but a thorough examination of its history and teachings—has been made in its educational institutions, and that by a compulsory royal act. In England, under the Establishment, or national church, the reading of the scriptures and the learning of the apostolic creed, the Lord's prayer, and the ten commandments, if not so compulsory, are urged upon parents and the guardians of youth as beneficial to their religious and moral welfare. In view of these national examples, why may not the Bible be read from day to day in our schools as a prescribed duty? There its shining truths may reach the hearts of some who have no other opportunity of hearing them, and leave varied, wholesome and lasting impressions upon their minds. Surely it is proper to discuss this question to the fullest extent with those who oppose it, no matter whom they are—Romanists, Jews or infidels. The first we shall be slow to reconcile to our liberal Protestant systems, even if we burn our Bibles to please them, because their religion flourishes better in the dimness of the cloister than in the light of truth and knowledge. The Israelite is more tolerant, and does not despise the commandments which his fathers received from God and deeply cherished. And the free-thinker will hardly care, with all his cavils, to root out the healthful influence which even irreligious writers have conceded springs from the teachings of the Bible. But bigotry and infidelity have strange ways, and to these it is owing to-day that

the Bible is not read in our schools. As it was in the days of Christ, so it is now. The common people heard him gladly, but the priesthood and rulers discarded his doctrines because he opposed their self-interests and taught purity of life. In these days it is not the common people who oppose the reading of the Bible in the schools; it is the men who control the interests of the schools. Until this tyranny is subdued by the power of Christianity—the Christianity of Christ—we must humble ourselves and submit to the powers that be, even as he, our Head and exemplar, bowed before his persecutors, trusting in his Father and ours to bring about our triumph in his own good time and way.

It is possible that there is an impression in the minds of the people that the reading of the Bible in the public schools will conflict with the spirit of our national constitution; but we are unable to see how the simple recital of God's word, without note or comment, is going to endanger the religious freedom of the country. For all that we can see, any other historical or moral reading-book might be excluded from the schools for a similar reason. The truth of history and the Bible will be vindicated, though all nations perish.

With reference to the school-moneys, the question is, perhaps, more difficult of solution. It seems, however, as if religious influences have no right to interfere in the legitimate use of these funds. The money is raised by taxation from individuals of all classes, without regard to their religious beliefs, for the benefit of all people who

have children to educate. No denomination of Christians or political party can claim a preference in those benefits, or be denied a share in them. But in a Protestant country the Protestant religion will naturally prevail; and with it comes freedom of thought and speech, and a love of the good and true. Can we, then, afford to have the Bible, which is the accepted exponent of goodness and truth, excluded from the daily hearing of the children in our schools, lest some should be offended?

Finally, we feel that the whole subject resolves itself into this: That unless any particular form of bigotry is now, or is henceforth to be, the religion of our nation, or unless education from which Bible truths shall be discarded is preferable to sound spiritual knowledge, the wisdom of those who oppose the daily reading of the Bible in our public schools is to be considered "foolishness with God."

CHAPTER XXI.

THE NECESSITY OF PREACHING THE TRUTH, AND HOW TO MAKE IT EFFECTIVE.

WHAT is needed in these days of infidelity to awaken sinners, make the devil angry, and glorify God, is plain, earnest, practical preaching, supported by earnest, sincere, united and persistent prayer. The churches and the people have been so long sitting under the influence of honeyed words and intellectual emollients that the gospel power of the apostles has been immensely weakened. Look

at Stephen's preaching—plain, simple truths, plainly expressed, yet slashing like a cimeter at the very heart-strings and consciences of his hearers. Who dares to preach like that to-day—to make sin hideous by stripping off its tinsel, and arouse the smothering depravity of the soul until it overflows and kills the preacher?

Every sane Christian believes in preaching Christ crucified as the only salvation of dying sinners; but who dares to openly tell men and women that they are the sinners whom Christ came to save, and that unless they are born again—unless they heartily repent and turn away from their evil courses—they will all perish? That was Christ's way—that was apostolic preaching in the first century, and in after-centuries men preached these truths, and died in their defence at the stake.

Men, in a general way, will listen quietly and without concern to the modern preacher as he gracefully unfolds the love of Christ to those who believe in him as the only Saviour and do the best they can to please him by moral lives. Therefore we are not surprised to hear, next day, from the lips of one of his congregation, something like this: "It is impossible for me to believe in the miraculous conception of Christ, or that his death can save a dying world; I would like to believe it but I can't; all I can do is to live the best I know how, be sincere in my unbelief, and if there is a future life, I suppose it will be all right with me, any way."

It is wonderful how much of this spirit is abroad in the world. We do not say that the half-hearted, large-head-

ed ministers are altogether to blame for this corruption of Bible truth, but somebody is; and if judgment begins at the house of God, where will the sinner and the ungodly appear? Men do not, as a general thing, like to be confronted with the message: "You are the sinner abiding in the wrath of God—you, whose whole life is a stench in the nostrils of your Creator; *you* are the sinner whom Jesus died to save; *you* must be born again; *you* must truly repent and seek forgiveness, or go down to an everlasting, burning hell; *you* must reform your miserable life, and submit to God and obey him, or forever perish." This they call the language of "fanaticism," which the intelligence of this age has exploded; doctrines good enough for their praying old fathers and mothers, but which, in the light of Comte, Huxley, Spencer, Darwin and Ingersoll, have lost their force, and should be consigned to oblivion forever.

Verily, these must be—nay, are, the "perilous times" foretold by the Apostle Peter; and we have reason to shudder when we consider where all this unbelief will end, what fearful lives and dreadful deaths will overtake the very next generation, and consign millions to that outer darkness where there will be wailing and gnashing of teeth.

What is to be done? "As ye go, preach"—preach the living truth of God, as John the Baptist, Christ and his apostles preached it—preach the wickedness of sin, universal depravity, hell-fire of the hottest degree for hardened sinners, the necessity of being born again. Get everybody under conviction for sins and inward deprav-

ity. "Cry aloud, and spare not," for the time is short. Should the church members fight the doctrine of holiness as something strange and fanatical, bring them under condemnation with the many Bible truths that show the requirements of God in this respect: "Be ye holy;" "this is the will of God, even your sanctification;" "without holiness no man can see God;" "the soul that sinneth it shall die," and a hundred others.

The idea to be impressed upon all classes of hearers, at all times and in all places, is the necessity of thorough regeneration, based on a heartfelt repentance for sin, the forgiveness of sin, the new birth, and pure living to the glory of God. Point out Christ as "the Way," to reach whom all must "strive to enter in at the strait gate;" "the Truth," as manifested in his teachings; and "the Life," whereby, through the grace of the Holy Ghost, full salvation may and must be secured by every follower of Jesus.

The preaching that excites the wrath of the devil and, of course, pleases God, has been thus briefly and earnestly outlined. Men must be led to see themselves as God sees them before he can reveal himself to them in saving love; they must come to a realizing sense of their utter helplessness and inability to save themselves, and the pressing necessity of being saved in God's own way. Then will the gospel balm come blessedly to their souls in the form of peace with God, a gift that passes all understanding and exceeds all other joy.

Another suggestion: Let the preachers make much of

the "nots" of the Bible—Thou shalt not have any other gods before me; thou shalt not worship graven images of any sort, nor serve them; thou shalt not blaspheme my name; thou shalt not work on the Sabbath; thou shalt not dishonor father or mother; thou shalt not kill; thou shalt not commit adultery; thou shalt not steal; thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor; thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's property or blessings; and so on in all that God expressly forbids in his word.

Sinners and the devil can stand a great deal of sentimental preaching—a great deal of persuasion to accept Christ, so long as sin is not denounced. But when it is, then comes the strife; then the devil comes down in great anger; the hardened infidels are roused into opposition; the self-righteous begin to tremble; sinners begin to cry, "God be merciful to me"—and the revival has commenced in earnest.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE FOLLY AND WICKEDNESS OF SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS EXEMPLIFIED.

Most of the opposition which our Saviour encountered while on earth came from the Pharisees, who claimed to be righteous because they were the descendants of Abraham, the children of God's covenant with him, and the strictness with which they followed the religious forms, ceremonies and traditions of their ancestors. On several occa-

sions their doctrines and practices met with the severest rebukes from the lips of the Saviour, who openly denounced them as hypocrites, and unworthy of a place in the kingdom of heaven. One of these conflicts with them, recorded in John viii., is of great significance as showing his estimation of their pretended righteousness, as is, also, his denunciation of them in Matthew xxiii., where he compares them to "whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones and of all uncleanness."

Their self-righteousness and outward religion might deceive many, but it could not find favor in his sight, for "he knew what was in man," and placed no value on their long prayers and pretentious observances while they devoured widows' houses, and gave other evidences of sinful hearts; paying attention to the minor requirements of the law, yet scorning the practice of mercy and love toward their fellow-men, and rejecting him as their Saviour. In this they showed only the natural result of self-righteousness—unbelief in the gospel, and the expectation of entering heaven by morality and pious ceremonies,—results quite too common in this day and generation to be overlooked. Our Saviour was accustomed to teach by parables. Let us, for once, follow his example:

Scœva is one of many who have been wrecked in mid-ocean by the sinking of their ship. Some have gone down forever in the great waters. Others are floating on boards and pieces of the wreck. There has been no violent storm. The vessel was not lost by stress of weather, but through

the fault of some of those who controlled her movements. Some of the wrecked ones have found safety in the life-boats, and others have floated off upon whatever they could find to cast overboard. Sceva has secured a stout, broad plank for his life-preserved. A few have gathered up fragments of bread and flasks of fresh water, and Sceva has been thus provident.

And now, after the wind has scattered these poor wanderers far and wide, it subsides into a light and pleasant air, and the sea becomes quiet. The bright sunshine serves to warm the limbs and dry the clothing of Sceva, and in the possession of something to eat and drink he feels almost happy. How it is going to end he knows not. Whither he is drifting he cares not. But he hopes for the best, and that he shall reach his desired haven safely.

At length night begins to settle upon the sea, and the declining sun reveals to his vision a noble steamship rapidly approaching him. Nearer and nearer she comes. Now she is very near; but Sceva makes no cry for help, and it is only as the great steamer is about to dash past him that the commander sees the poor man on his plank. A few brief orders, and the obedient vessel pances in her course. The commander, from the wheel-house, hails the helpless man: "Hold on a minute longer, and I'll send a boat for you." The feeble answer comes up from the waters: "But you are a British ship. I see the cross on your flag, and I won't be picked up by you. No, sir! I'm an independent American citizen, of wealth and influence,

and I never liked your nation and people! The weather is pleasant, I have food and water, and I am going to wait here until some vessel from my own nation comes along and takes me home. I am safe enough till then." "But, my fine fellow," replies the commander, "don't you see night coming and the storm-cloud yonder? You had better come with us." "No, I will not! I have a strong plank under me, and I'll risk the weather. Go on, and don't annoy me any more!"

The poor, dying sinner, clinging to his morality and worldly possessions for his eternal safety, is no less foolish than the drowning Sceva. The ship of Zion is nigh to save him to-day. From her spars floats the flag of Peace, bearing the symbol of him who offers salvation from sin and eternal misery, and bestows purity and eternal joy upon those who accept his redeeming love.

CHAPTER XXIII.

PEOPLE WHO ARE TIRED OF THE GOSPEL—PREVALENT IN- DIFFERENCE TO THE TRUTH.

"SUNDAY is such a long, tiresome day," said an acquaintance recently. "Why don't you go to church, then, even if it is only to pass away the time?" we queried. "So I would," was the reply, "if the ministers would only tell me something new, but they all preach the same old things that I've heard over and over, and over again." Here was a man tired of the gospel—so tired of its precious truths

and comforting words that he would not go to church, preferring a Sunday theatre instead.

It is strange how many excuses people will frame to avoid listening to the voice of God. We have here in Chicago scores of elegant, not to say luxurious churches, brilliant on Sunday with flowers, costly dresses, and architectural display; rich in pulpit oratory and intellectual research, and music, both instrumental and vocal, the best that can be purchased for money. Still the vacant seats are numerous, unless the preacher (as in two or three rare instances) has achieved a sensational triumph by opposing some unpopular Christian doctrine and scattering seeds of unbelief in the hearts of his hearers. These are exceptional cases, for there are very few churches outside of our theatres and concert halls that can fill their pews with either ungodly or devout attendants. The people are tired of the gospel.

Tired of the word of truth; tired of divine teachings that should make them wise unto salvation; tired of the story of the cross and the dying Saviour; tired of the promise of a joyful eternity to be won through the instrumentalities of faith and prayer; tired of appeals to the heart and conscience to turn away from evil and walk in holiness and righteousness; tired of the blessed character of Christ revealed to us in his words and works; tired of everything that does not bring money or sensual pleasure to the individual!

Who is to blame for the masses being tired of the gospel? Are the churches, the ministers, or the non-attend-

ants upon divine worship, or all of these, responsible for the indifference and the unbelief that so generally prevail throughout the land?

This question opens up too large a field for investigation to be cultivated in this brief space. We do not say that judgment should begin at the house of God, but God himself speaks very plainly to his ministering servants and defines their duties and responsibilities very minutely in Ezekiel iii., 16-21. The sacred desk is no place for "glittering generalities" or sugar-coated devices to captivate the mind and leave the consciences and hearts of the unsaved unawakened. Are the people themselves to blame? In the sight of God they are; for he that believeth not is already condemned; and if they turn away their feet from the sanctuary on his holy day because they are tired of his gospel, and seek their own pleasure elsewhere, how can they expect to be saved? It is well enough to say that "God is love," for he is; but men and women must love him also, in order to complete the harmony between him and them. And without this harmony there can be no salvation.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE REQUIREMENTS OF CHRISTIANITY—LOVING OUR NEIGHBORS AS OURSELVES.

OUR Saviour had an interesting and most important lesson to teach the Pharisees of his day in the parable of the man who endeavored to travel from Jerusalem to Jericho, but fell among thieves, was robbed, and left half-dead by the wayside; Luke x., 25-37.

The lawyer whose questions led to the recital of this parable knew the Mosaic law in regard to loving God and his neighbors properly. He had read it as follows in the books of Moses: "Thou shalt" (said God) "have no other gods before me." (Exodus xx., 3.) "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might." (Deuteronomy vi., 5.) "Thou shalt not avenge nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." (Leviticus xix., 18.) But this lawyer, with all the Pharisees, had interpreted these commandments to suit his own narrow religious views, and confined their meaning simply to this: That God must be worshiped as the Creator in preference to idols and other gods, and

the love of the neighbor was limited to doing no wrong to him.

Christ came to give the Mosaic law a wider and more definite construction. "All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them." (Matthew viii., 12.) "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as *thyself*." (Matthew xxii., 37-47.) And in the parable referred to he explains to the lawyer who is his neighbor, for it seems that the Pharisees did not consider everybody their neighbors, but were partial in their views upon this subject; perhaps no one but a prosperous Pharisee could, in his estimation, have any claim upon his affections. The lesson to be taught in the parable was this: That our neighbor is the first man, or woman, or child, that we find in trouble, need, or sorrow, whether a stranger, acquaintance, friend, or enemy, no matter what may be the sufferer's station in life, or how much soever he or her may differ from ourselves in social or religious opinions. Such a one we are to love with tenderness and compassion, and relieve and comfort to the best of our ability.

So Christ designed to teach us to love God with all our affections (the heart), with all sincerity and truth (the soul), and all the energies of our being (our might).

The parable also exemplifies Christ's love for us. The famous Martin Luther, making it the subject of one of his discourses, thus classifies the persons and the incidents

therein referred to: The wounded one represents every man in his natural state, beset and nearly destroyed by sin and evil forces. The priest represents church ceremonies and forms. The Levite represents the worldlings, who, absorbed in the pursuits and pleasures of life, cannot halt to bestow relief. The good Samaritan represents Christ, despised and rejected by the formal church and the world, as the Samaritans were by the Jews. The wine and the oil represent the cleansing and healing power of grace and the gospel, which, being combined, bring comfort and peace to the troubled soul. In this connection let us note the love and compassion of Jesus in binding up the sufferer's wounds and covering his nakedness with his own righteous garments. The inn represents the true church of Christ in the world, wherein the saved sinner receives all needful care; and the host or landlord represents the true ministry of the gospel, whom Christ graciously rewards here, with the promise of further blessings when he shall come again.

Do any doubt the compassion of Christ, or his power to relieve and comfort the sin-sick sinner? Hear his glorious invitation: "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

CHAPTER XXV.

THE CHANGED CHARACTER OF PAUL CONSIDERED—SINNER
AND SAINT.

ST. PAUL stands out upon the sacred page as one of the most trustworthy witnesses to the saving power and excellency of Christ. Born at a period when the Jewish religion had degenerated into a pharisaical system of empty forms and ceremonies, when the worship of God had lost the elements of sincerity and earnestness, and when the heart no longer echoed the song of praise uttered by the tongue in the temple service, Paul was educated in the law, and brought the brilliancy of his talents into the popular rendering of its requirements. In this distortion of God's will we find him pre-eminently zealous, bringing the followers of Jesus before the Jewish authorities for persecution, and rejoicing in the havoc that he made among Christians. To convert such a self-confident and intelligent opponent of the religion of Jesus required a miracle, and in that act the whole mental and spiritual being of the man was changed. No longer a destroyer of Christians, he became a zealous leader among them, and an object of persecution in their behalf. It is in this latter

character that the Christian world to-day so highly venerates his record and gives earnest heed to the teachings of his epistles. And it is well to do so; for if ever human nature was thoroughly subdued to the divine will, and imbued with the fullness of the spirit of Christ, it was done in Paul.

Look at the object of his life after his transformation from nature's darkness to the marvelous light of the gospel of the Son of God, as set forth in his epistle to the Philippians; desiring to know Christ, to be found in him, and to magnify him; "counting all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord;" laboring in the cause of the gospel under the severest afflictions, yet rejoicing in the Lord continually.

Paul, as portrayed in his own writings, is a study for sinners as well as Christians. As earnest, as zealous, as self-confident, in his ignorance of the true religion and his following of sinful ways as he was in his Christian career, he thought that he was doing right and would receive the divine approval. His sincerity of opinion and practice before his conversion none can doubt. No human power could have convinced him, in his ignorance of God's character and will, that he was pursuing a course that would plunge him into eternal misery. He would have pleaded his profound knowledge of the law, and his desire to do right, as manifested in his zeal. So the unawakened sinner too often trusts in his sincerity of life, despising hypocritical professions of piety in others, and depending upon his morality, his power to overcome temptation by the force of

his own will, and the universal and indiscriminate mercy of God toward his creatures. Fortified in this position, nothing but the special grace of God, as in Paul's case, can overthrow him, and arouse him to the falsity of his opinions and the danger of his condition.

How differently Paul wrote in the epistle to which we have referred, having no confidence in the flesh to overcome sin, but desiring to "win Christ and be found in him, not having ~~mine~~ own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith."

To the converted, Paul is also a wise, a comforting counselor. It was to this class that most of his letters were addressed, and in them the true Christian discerns the reflection of the teachings of his divine Master. Everywhere Christ is glorified in all the phases of Paul's personal experience and advice. The humility, the patience, the submission and the obedience of Paul compare richly with these traits of character in the earthly life of his Saviour, manifesting the perfection of the apostle under the influence of the heavenly grace wherein he abounded, and whereby Christ was magnified in him.

Do any doubt the possibility of attaining to such a state of grace as this? Christian, you may do it under the gracious influences of your Redeemer's Holy Spirit. Sinner, Christ can so cleanse you from sin that your righteousness may equal that of Paul. God rules now as then. Are you willing to be so fully saved?

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE VALUE OF RELIGIOUS TESTIMONY.

THE influence of a witness in our courts is in proportion to the importance of his testimony, his positive knowledge of that which he affirms, and his strict adherence to the truth in all its fullness, whatever its effect upon the case in hand. Few things so militate against the evidence of a witness as hesitation, which evinces a disposition to keep back a part of the truth, or to garble it in such a way as to convey a wrong impression of the circumstances to the minds of a jury. Therefore perfect frankness, even to the confession of his own mistakes of judgment, will strongly commend a witness to the tribunal before which he testifies. The testimony of a professing Christian before his church or his class derives its value, also, from similar characteristics. That is the best testimony which comes from the heart, prompted by the Holy Ghost, whether it may involve criticism, or even censure, or elicit admiration for its deep spirituality and clearness of experience.

One saint may only be able to confess that God, for Christ's sake, has pardoned every sin; but this witness, be-

ing fully assured of what he speaks, carries to the hearts of all his hearers the pleasing impression that he stands before them and God fully justified and filled with the joy of conversion. Are there any unsaved ones who hear this evidence—souls who have at any time been convicted, or convinced of righteousness, of sin, and of judgment—such a joyous testimony of the power and willingness of God to forgive sin and reconcile us to him, so that we are no longer his enemies, but adopted into his family as sons and daughters, must come like the voice of an angel to warn and encourage them also to seek an interest in the salvation of Jesus. Does any tried and tempted soul, converted to Christ, begin to testify to a desire to be filled with righteousness, and to be delivered from inbred depravity, that experience finds sympathy in many other souls who acknowledge the condition of the witness to be their own, and find encouragement in the Bible promises on which he rests his hope of certain deliverance in God's own good time and way. Does any soul which has been delivered from the experience just referred to, testify to the power of the blood of Jesus Christ to cleanse from *all* unrighteousness, and the ability of the Holy Ghost to fully sanctify the whole being and make these infirm bodies temples wherein he may dwell, how many hearts in which remain certain “roots of bitterness springing up to trouble them” rejoice to hear of such a glorious freedom from inbred sin! Another soul may testify to a still deeper work of grace than even this—a perfect union of the branch to the true Vine, so that the life of Christ flows freely into the heart of this

saint, and overflows upon every other heart with which it comes in contact.

Now there is positive value in each of these evidences of the divine work wrought within the soul. Somebody is edified, comforted and strengthened by them, and God is glorified in the confession of his power to save to the uttermost under all the different circumstances of saintship; but he is more glorified in every desire, created under such testimony, that results in a more perfect consecration in order to obtain the highest and richest spiritual gifts.

The value of Christian testimony as an important means of grace is therefore established beyond a peradventure. This value is increased by the freshness, the earnestness, the fullness of assurance, and the directness with which it is uttered. Such testimony is prompted by the Holy Ghost, and is by him applied to the human hearts for whom it is needed, bringing forth good fruits for time and eternity.

THE testimonies of the saved children of God, given from time to time in the religious press, in missions, and in class-rooms, especially of those who enjoy the blessing of holiness—that “perfect love” which “casteth out fear”—are remarkably similar in spirit and expression. This cannot very well be otherwise, for whatever are the processes by which salvation or Bible holiness is attained, the results must necessarily resemble each other. It may be objected by those who are unsaved, or only justified, that

these professions of holiness are manifestations of a self-righteous spirit. Those who understand the operations of the Holy Ghost upon the sanctified soul will not, however, fall into this mistake, for the true Christian knows that he speaks not of his own perfection, but of that which is wrought by an indwelling Christ. In this connection the words of the apostle John, in the second verse of the fourth chapter of his first epistle—"Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God"—receive a new and deeper meaning; for the sanctified Christian knows that Christ has come into his flesh, and he is born of God; and "whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world" and sin. Thus the withholding of a profession of the blessing of holiness, after it has become an experience, is dishonoring God; and often a neglect of this duty has been a snare of the devil to mislead and curse with spiritual poverty many a poor soul that should have openly confessed the sufficiency of the blood of Jesus to cleanse mankind from all unrighteousness, and of the Holy Ghost to effect the new birth that makes us more like God. If God has thus blessed us, let us publicly accord to him all the glory of our salvation.

CHAPTER XXVII.

CHRISTIANITY IN ITS RELATIONS TO GOOD LIVING AND
HAPPY DYING—TWO DEATH-BEDS—UNIVER-
SALISM AND SUICIDE—DEATH PREFER-
ABLE TO A SINFUL LIFE.

A vision of the night: two souls passing from time into eternity—how solemn the scene!

I.

In a dimly lighted room an elderly man lay dying. Around his bed, amid silence broken only by his shortened breathing, and their own sighs and sobs of grief, were gathered the members of his family. On his features was a peaceful smile, indicating entire resignation and inward happiness.

At the head of the bed stood the blessed Saviour of men, attended by holy angels; at its foot hovered the sneering and repulsive Prince of Darkness. While thus they awaited the coming of the angel of death to terminate the sufferings of the poor, frail body over which they watched, Satan said, in a peevish tone, unheard by mortal ears: “Son of God, this soul is thine—I have no claim upon it! Forty years ago this man was an unclean gam-

bler, and one of my most faithful servants. Whatever I required of him he performed in strict obedience. But one evening he heard a street-preacher proclaim with thrilling fervor, 'Ye must be born again!' Thy Holy Spirit applied the warning to his soul, and he trembled at its power. Then he flew to thee for help, and not in vain. I lost my hold upon him, and you gained a saint! In vain, for years, I strove to allure him again into my service with all my devilish arts, but he would nevermore listen to my words. From that day he was thine for time; now he is thine for eternity."

"Yea," replied the Saviour, "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord; for he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live, and I will be his exceeding great reward forever!"

At this moment death delivered the dying Christian from all the trials of earth, and the angels of God carried him to Abraham's bosom, to await the resurrection of the just.

II.

In a luxurious apartment an emaciated man lay struggling for breath, his body tortured with pain and his countenance manifesting the intensity of his mental and physical suffering. There were near relatives of the dying man about his bed, waiting to hear his final groan, and to divide his substance among themselves; for he was very rich.

• Again the Saviour and the Enemy of Souls were present, but Satan now stood beside the pillow of the sufferer,

while the Saviour, with bended head, wept at the foot of the bed.

“This man,” said Satan, “belongs to me, and a better follower I never had! In his youth he stole his employer’s money, at my behest. I helped him to hide his theft; I led him to seek, with his ill-gained wealth, the vilest pleasures in all available abodes of vice, and while I despised the fool for his folly, I led him daily deeper into the currents of dissipation and disgrace. I aided him to gain wealth until his avarice outgrew in fierceness and power all other vices in which he had indulged. Oh, how faithful he was to my suggestions! I heaped upon him enormous riches, and with these he largely purchased worldly honors and influence. I taught him hypocrisy. Under the cloak of a professing Christian, he gave numerous pittances to benevolent societies, and the public bowed down before him, and more than repaid his charities, satisfied with his approval. Long life was his, with luxury and every pleasure at his command. Once I thought he was lost to me forever. At a revival meeting, one night, thy Spirit urged him to repent and turn from my service to thine. For a brief space he saw thy bleeding wounds and heavenly face, and faltered in his downward course. But the sacrifice which thou didst require from him in exchange for the benefit of thine own was repelled by the avarice that I had implanted in his breast. He could not serve God and mammon, as he gladly would have done. But I reasoned with him; thy Spirit was grieved away by his indifference to his eternal welfare, and I triumphed

over thee in the spiritual darkness that then fell upon his soul. From that hour he was mine. No gospel truth had any longer a charm for him, or wrought an influence upon his life. Deeper he plunged into worldly business and pleasures; and now, see! he gains the reward of all his life-long enmity to thee! He comes, in the arms of death, to me, to be consigned, with all my eternal hatred, to the deepest pit of hell!"

And as the devil strode out of the room in vindictive triumph, taking with him the lost and agonized soul, the Saviour turned sadly away, saying:

"Alas, I would have saved him had he come to me, but he would not! Verily, the wages of sin is death!"

THE tendency of Universalism, or that doctrine which teaches the final salvation of all men, however wickedly they may have lived or died, is to promote evil rather than righteousness. The idea that the worst of crimes will escape everlasting punishment can only tend to increase the indulgence of revenge, lust, selfishness and other baser passions, by taking away the sting of death, which is the sense of sin in the human soul. To illustrate: Several years ago a pious Baptist minister, after preaching the gospel from youth to old age, became incapacitated for further pulpit duty, and was inexorably superannuated. His life had been spent in study and Christian work, and he had no more appreciation of worldly business than an infant. Thrown upon his own resources, with a large family, without the means of supporting himself and those

dependent upon him, he became an object of charity, and the world was not a pleasant place for them. In these straitened circumstances he was induced to go, one Sunday, to hear a Universalist minister preach—probably such a sermon as he had never before heard. At its close he arose and addressed the minister as follows: “Sir, if you can convince me that your doctrine is true, I and my family will all be in eternity before to-morrow night!” Of course there could be no answer to so reasonable a remark, for if there is nothing but joy and peace for all beyond the grave (as preached by the Universalists), why need he and his family suffer the trials and privations of this world any longer? Suicide and murder would soon deliver them out of all their troubles. What a wicked perversion of God’s truth is this!

AT the door of a revival tent, one evening, we met a man whose countenance indicated a life of dissipation, but who was then apparently perfectly sober. Entering into conversation with him, he was soon led to say that he had lived in sin to a fearful extent, and manifested all the anxiety of a sin-sick soul to become a better man. He deemed the minister who was then preaching an excellent evangelist, and spoke rationally of turning from darkness to the marvelous light of the gospel for relief and reform; but, said he, “I have so ruined myself by my bad practices that I fear if I give them up I shall die.” A little counsel followed; but we did not tell him, as we might

truly have done, that it was better for him to die saved than to live longer in iniquity.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE UNSCRIPTURAL AND DEBASING CHARACTER OF THE “EVOLUTION” PHILOSOPHY.

BRIEFLY speaking, the Evolutionists, represented by Charles R. Darwin, of England, and supported by numerous would-be “philosophers” on both sides of the Atlantic, assert that the higher forms of life, such as man, were “evolved,” or produced in succession from the lowest sort of existences—a shell-fish, or a snail, for instance—instead of being created a perfect man, coming from the hand of God complete, and made in the image of his Maker. Scarcely could anything more repulsive than this theory be presented to a Christian mind. This doctrine of “evolution” has been reduced to a graded system, founded upon the “survival of the fittest” of each class of existences, and the power of the “fittest” to produce a higher or more perfect state of existence in its progeny. The ingenuity of this system of belief has attracted the attention and gained the interest of many persons who are ready to receive any plausible doctrine rather than accept the Bible as the word of God; and in this way they have been led into another of the various forms of infidelity with which the world is cursed.

It seems to us that the errors of this system of thought arise from a misapplication of the knowledge which God has revealed to mankind through his servant and historian, Moses. It is true, according to sacred writ, that God's greatest and best creations in peopling the earth (man and woman) were the last in

“The perfect world by Adam trod;”

but the same sublime authority assures us that the birds and beasts and “every creeping thing” were as certainly distinct and characteristic in their original production upon the earth as man himself. (See Genesis i., 20-25.) “And God saw everything that he had made, and behold it was very good,” (verse 31.) Had anything been imperfect, is it reasonable that he would have thus given it his approval?

Everything, therefore, being perfect in its kind as it was originally made, and as we have reason to believe it must have been, there was no necessity for the “evolution” system of Darwin and his co-thinkers. Each animal, and bird, and reptile, and insect, came upon the stage of action complete in itself, to glorify its Creator by living the life given to it in the station to which Almighty wisdom assigned it. If God could create angels, (who are higher in the scale of existence than man) he surely could produce a perfect Adam out of the dust of the earth and give him a soul and a physical life every way appropriate to the chief of created earthly beings.

The minds of unsanctified men are so constituted that often effects are mistaken for causes, so that the designs of

the Creator become distorted to their mental vision. In such a contingency the judgment is warped, and the conclusion reached may be very, very far from the truth. Should they plead the sincerity of their opinions, they have yet to learn that sincerity is but a poor excuse for error, for error may be persisted in to the end of time and yet be error still.

Suppose an "evolutionist" for the first time sees a potato just dug from the ground and incrusted with its native soil. Without knowing anything of its origin or character, he brings the force of his intellect to its investigation, and applies his favorite theory of production. Did the potato produce the incrustation of earth, or did the earth produce the potato? The man who planted the seed-potato, watched over and cultivated the growing plant, and dug the new potato out of its place of growth, can answer the philosopher's question correctly; but if the philosopher will not believe the gardener, he may study upon the origin and nature of his new acquisition until he dies without becoming any wiser concerning it. If men are disposed to doubt the statements of the Bible relative to the work of creation and the history and destiny of mankind, they resemble this philosopher, or the sailor in an unknown sea who would refuse to be guided by his chart and compass. On the whole, in such a case, a little faith in divine wisdom is better than a library of fallacious reasoning.

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE PROCESSES BY WHICH MEN RECEIVE AND REJECT
SALVATION.

“FAITH,” said the apostle, in Romans x., 17—“faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” And when the ruler of the synagogue was told that his daughter was dead (Mark v., 36), a greater than Paul said to him, “Be not afraid; only believe.” In the Revised Version of the New Testament, the first passage quoted reads: “Hearing cometh by the word of Christ.” And in the second quotation it *was* the word of Christ that strengthened the sorrow-stricken parent.

Take these statements—these coincidences, if they are nothing more—as the groundwork for our belief in the Bible as the word of truth, the word of God, the word of Christ, and what better foundation can we have for our faith in the Holy Scriptures? The Jewish ruler found the word of Christ sufficient not only to soothe his fear and grief, but to restore his “loved and lost one,” in life and health, to the parental arms. So did the widow of Nain, (Luke vii., 11-16), when, by a word, the Saviour gave back to her burdened heart her only son for her comfort

and support, even from his bier. So did the sisters of Bethany (John xi., 1-45), when he called their brother from the grave. And so have thousands who have put their trust in him and his words since he ascended into heaven.

For the religion of the Bible is builded upon faith. Look at Abraham, Jacob, David, Stephen and Paul, with the host of others who, "having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise, God having provided some better thing for us," (who believe in their words) "that they without us should not be made perfect;" that is, *our* faith in their word, and in God's dealings with *them*, brings both us and them within the same fold, so that, together, we share in the promised blessings.

The religion of the Bible requires our faith in whatever it states, either "for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness," and is not only worthy of belief because "all scripture is given by inspiration of God," but because it is profitable for us, and "able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus." (2 Timothy iii., 15, 16.)

At least seven points of doctrine does the Lord require us to believe in order to prepare us for the intelligent reception of his salvation, namely: In himself as the Creator and Preserver of all things. In the Bible as his word. In the divine nature of Christ. In the perfect atonement wrought by Christ upon the cross for the sins of all mankind. In his resurrection from the dead. In his office as our Mediator and Advocate at the right hand

of the Father. In his coming to judge the living and the dead at the end of the world.

These form what may be esteemed as essential bases for our faith, without which our understanding of the religion of the Bible will be confused and uncertain. Nor are these doctrines, evidently, of equal importance in beginning the new life which the Bible describes and requires in proof of a change of heart, but they all so harmoniously unite in forming the Christian's creed that none should be omitted from it. The one great fundamental truth that the atonement on the cross was made once for all, is the center around which all our other beliefs should gather.

Our faith, however, should never be devoid of reason. Our devotion to God should be manifest in "our reasonable service," (Romans xii., 1,) and we should "be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh of us a reason of the hope that is in us, with meekness and fear." (1 Peter iii., 15.) And however much we may have previously been at variance with God and his salvation, as soon as we come into harmony with him by faith and love, there is nothing in the Bible that will seem contrary to our reason. Not a single command—not an event—not a promise within its lids will then appear unreasonable to us. We shall then see how our evil courses, the clouds of sin, our undue love of the world and its unhallowed delights, have obscured our understandings; and our minds, restored to purity and enlightened by the Holy Ghost, will then apprehend, as never before, the mercy, the love, the holiness, the wisdom and the power of God. Nowhere

does he require us to exercise faith without reason. In Isaiah i., 18, he specially invites sinning Israel to reason with him as to the perfect cure of sin which is warranted by his salvation—"Come," he says, "let us reason together," as friend reasons with friend; and then his merciful power to save to the uttermost is revealed: "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." Samuel, the God-chosen prophet of Israel, standing between the people and their Creator, exhorted them to reason with him before the Lord concerning the righteous acts of the Lord; and his argument was beneficial to Israel in convincing them of their errors. (1 Samuel xii., 7). Job, also (xiii., 3), desired to reason with God, and "the man of Uz," much afflicted and at fault in his language, was eventually brought to a truer knowledge of God and his purpose, by the divine argument, than he had ever before possessed, and was more supremely blessed after his conviction than at any former period of his life. It is indeed profitable to reason with God, for in all such controversy, conducted on man's part with meekness and reverence, wisdom—heavenly wisdom—is imparted to the soul.

But some person will perhaps say that his reason is unable to grasp Bible truths and reconcile them with human wisdom. Be sure, dear friend, if this is the thought of your heart, that no one more than yourself needs the aid of heavenly wisdom. Your soul is veiled with unbelief, and the scales have not yet fallen from your eyes. You have never, then, (if you are sincere in your assertion)

seen all around you souls perishing with sin and needing a salvation that no human power or invention can devise. You have never, then, felt your own wickedness, your own need of deliverance, your own inability to save yourself from the penalties that your infraction of the offended laws of God will surely inflict upon you if you die unconverted. You are deeply enshrouded in darkness that may be felt. The light of truth, the joy of salvation, have no place in your heart; you are living "without hope and without God in the world." It is indeed time for you to awaken out of your fatal slumber to reason, first, with *yourself*, and then with God, asking, "Whither am I tending?"

If such is your darkened condition of soul, perhaps you also say, "I cannot believe in all the historical portions of the Bible, many of its miracles, the vicarious atonement of Christ, or the sufficiency of it to save me from sin and its consequences. I would if I *could*, but really I *cannot*."

But, friend, you are a reasonable creature. You exercise sound reason in everyday transactions; yea, you exercise faith daily in many things that you read and hear. You say that you have never seen any person who has returned from beyond the grave, and so how are you to know whether there is a heaven or a hell? Very well. Now have you ever been to Siberia, or have you ever seen and conversed with an inhabitant of that dreary, frozen country, or with any person who ever visited it? Possibly not, and yet you have probably read descriptions of it in

the writings of others who, like yourself, have never been there. All the descriptions of the country by these various writers, however, strangers, probably, to each other as well as to you, so correspond that you are easily induced to believe whatever they have written. In this particular you exhibit a faith in humanity which if bestowed upon the Bible with equal fullness as the word of God would bring you very nigh to the kingdom of heaven. It is true that while thousands do believe the Bible, and ask for it the fullest credence, thousands, like yourself, doubt its claims to their confidence, even with the same evidences that human works of travel and history offer for belief.

CHAPTER XXX.

THE SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED.

Not many years ago a party of lawyers voluntarily associated themselves together to settle the question whether the evidence which the Bible contains within itself is sufficient to establish its claims to popular belief. These men were not Christians, but wise in matters pertaining to their profession. They read the Bible together; they debated its statements and teachings in detail; they scrutinized it in all its parts with legal precision; and when the investigation was closed, they rendered a verdict that its truths and claims to human confidence are self-sustained.

Now the principal points upon which the Bible claims universal belief are the history of man's fall through disobedience to God; the penalties incurred by his wickedness; the necessity of a substitute to suffer for sinful men lest the entire race should perish; the fullness of salvation of those who accept Christ as their Redeemer and cease from their rebellion against God; the glorious promises of present peace and future happiness of the faithful redeemed ones, and the certain punishment that will overtake the ungodly. Faith in the Bible includes all these positions and propositions, and has for its object the salvation which it offers through acceptance of the Redeemer. The object thus presented is one that for value and excellence surpasses all the other things which men possess and admire, for its worth and virtue extend throughout life, death and eternity, while all other objects on earth are valuable only during our existence on this side of the grave. It therefore becomes, or should become, to each individual the "pearl of great price" mentioned by the Saviour in one of his parables, (Matthew xiii., 45, 46,) for which the wise merchant sold all his other possessions in order to secure it for his own. Faith having an object of such great value—the privilege of dwelling with the Lord forever in a condition of the highest joy, through free grace—makes it the purpose of the believer to obtain it at the gospel price; and no sooner is this faith, this purpose, manifested than the power, wisdom and love of God flow into the soul to strengthen it, and secure the jewel of its desire.

In bringing about this happy result, the convert's *will* has been exercised as certainly as it would have been in any business transaction. The heart has felt its needs, and sought relief; the will has become fixed in that direction; faith rests sweetly in the Saviour's love, and hope inspires the soul. The convert has reasoned with God and become convinced of his errors and the truths of the Bible. He has "come to himself" in the spiritual sense, and now, as he strives to meet the conditions of salvation, his will, his desires and faith are brought into unison with God, and the new birth is complete.

On the other hand, if there is no desire to be saved—no heart-felt need of a change in the life—there is no object presented for which the soul is inclined to seek—no purpose to obtain salvation in the Bible manner; there is no faith—no life, for the soul is "dead in trespasses and sins." In this condition, too, there may be more than passive indifference to the welfare of the soul, and prejudice take the place of indifference. When a man says: "I would believe if I could, but such a belief is opposed by my reason," there is cause for the suspicion that he does not mean his reason, but rather his prejudices, which will not permit him to exercise an honest judgment, and that he does not wish to believe, for if he did he would have to relinquish his prejudices. And to an obstinate mind nothing can be more distressing than yielding up its deeply-rooted prejudices, even under the conviction that they are *wrong*.

The religion of the Bible is duplex in its character.

The "new covenant," like the old, is incomplete unless its terms are accepted and fulfilled with the simplicity and submission of children. "Except ye be converted, and become as little children," said the Redeemer, (Matthew xviii., 3) "ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." The seeker after salvation must repent, believe and obey, and then God bestows his mercy, love and eternal life. Like all contracts, this covenant must have two parties to it—one the needy applicant; the other his reconciled God. Everything depends upon meeting the conditions, as prescribed in the scriptures. A man may say, "I am going to San Francisco;" and he may even purchase his ticket, secure a berth in a sleeping-car, and carefully pack his trunk for the journey and send it to the depot; but if he refuses to leave his house and go to the train at the appointed time and place, he will never get to San Francisco, simply because he does not fulfil the conditions of the railroad company. What he has done is important for a safe and comfortable ride across the continent, but it is not enough. He does not *start*. So many persons express a determination to go to heaven, and exercise some of the means necessary to obtain its glories. If they manifest only a fruitless faith, a mere mental concession that Christ died to save sinners, and still continue to live in sin, they are like the traveler who stays at home when he should be hastening to the train. Very different, however, is the case of the man who, with an earnest, sincere determination to win an entrance into heaven, beseeches God's mercy upon his soul, and comes to the throne of grace with

godly sorrow, humility, meekness, and a heart tender with submission to God's will.

Philip H—— was a student in an eastern seminary —a lad possessing a good intellect, but manifesting a most remarkable degree of depravity for one so young. At sixteen he was a sot and a foul blasphemer from choice, rolling the vilest profanity like a sweet morsel under his tongue, proud of his vices, and openly refusing good counsels. The school was an excellent one. Its influences were cast in favor of morality and religion. About the time that Philip was preparing to leave it forever and return home, a religious revival occurred in the school and neighborhood. All the students except himself had been converted to Christ. But Philip refused to seek salvation, notwithstanding the prayers and labors of his teachers and classmates in his behalf. The last day of the term arrived and Philip was still unconverted. At that late hour the Holy Spirit strove with him earnestly. The wickedness of his life was sensibly felt, but self-will had also a share in his conviction. "I am going away from here," he said, "with the worst record of any boy in the school. To-night the last prayer-meeting will be held; *I will be there and be saved.*" His determination was to make a thorough reformation of his life. He would start anew. There was at first no godly sorrow for his past career, but the desire of his soul was a changed life—a new character with which to leave the seminary. He was at the evening meeting; went forward for prayers, was deeply convicted, and soundly converted—re-

ceiving salvation because he needed it—receiving it as a free gift. On these terms God's mercy and grace were obtained, because for once his own will and that of his offended Creator were in earnest unison. His conversion was thorough, for he met the conditions that his case required; and when I last met with him he was engaged in preaching the everlasting gospel of peace.

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE DUTY OF WORSHIPING GOD—THE ELEMENTS OF TRUE DEVOTION.

TRUE worship has gratitude for its foundation. There must be a sense of obligation in the heart when it is lifted up to worship God—an appreciation of past mercies received that manifests itself in thankfulness. The gratitude may not extend beyond temporal blessings, but even this is acceptable to God. An irreligious man was accustomed always to say reverently at the end of every meal, "Thank God for my dinner!" or any other regular repast. That was his way of worshiping God. It is not known that he ever prayed, but the expression of his thankfulness in this respect was undoubtedly sincere and hearty. Had he ever felt the pangs of an awakened conscience, it is probable that he would have gone to the acknowledged source of his sustenance for forgiveness, and found peace for his soul. On the other hand, the converted man finds much more of

blessing in his life for which to be thankful, and as a result of his being reconciled to God through the salvation of our Lord Jesus Christ, he worships his Creator with a far deeper appreciation of benefits received than any sinner can enjoy.

True devotion to God is also manifested in a lively faith. The worshiper must believe that the Bible is the word of God; that the plan of salvation which it reveals is perfect and effective; that the blood of Jesus Christ is a sufficient atonement for the sins of all mankind, and that the many precious promises written in the scriptures will certainly be fulfilled if we are willing to keep the covenant to the end. There must be faith in the love, the mercy, the wisdom, and the power of the Creator to save, to protect and to bless all who put their trust in him.

True worship implies perfect submission to the will of God. Where there is rebellion in the heart against him and his revealed desires, our devotion, however elegantly expressed in word and gesture, must fail to please him, and places us among the hypocrites whom our Lord, when on earth, so severely rebuked. We must be willing to say with the agonized Saviour in Gethsemane, "Not my will, but thine be done." In this spirit our worship will be perfect and acceptable. Then, in sorrow or in joy, we can heartily acknowledge that the will of the Lord is good, and that he doeth all things well.

True worship requires obedience to all the revealed commandments of God and the laws of our country and the State in which we live. The Bible demands it, and

peace follows the practice. To disobey God—to dishonor the government under which we live—to despise wholesome laws for the restraint of evil and the promotion of virtue and morality—is displeasing to him whom we ought to worship. On the other hand, he requires us to encourage and sustain his servants in every good work, and to assist heartily in every enterprise that has for its object the relief of the needy and suffering, and the welfare of society.

True worship means supreme love for God and a helpful love for our fellow-beings. There cannot be envy, hatred or malice in real devotion; nor pride, vain-glory or hypocrisy. Self must be put out of sight in the precious hours of worship, at which time praise, thanksgiving, and the desire for God to be glorified in all his works and ways, should fill our hearts. In prayer we come seeking blessings for ourselves and others, but in true worship the glory of God and the triumph of his plans form the burden of our heart-songs.

Everybody, and especially God's dear children, should cultivate this spirit of true devotion. It is due to him from all his creatures; let us not, then, withhold from him that which is his own, nor hide in a napkin the talent he has given us. The true worshiper alone finds the truest joy on earth, a joy to be continued through all eternity.

CHAPTER XXXII.

BIBLE CHRONOLOGY—THE PERSECUTION OF ISRAEL IN EGYPT
—THE AGE OF THE WORLD.

THE ordinary versions of the Scriptures place the date of God's promise to Abraham that his seed—he having at that time no child—should sojourn in Egypt 400 years, and then come forth, at about 1913 or 1911 years before Christ. The Bible chronologists differ here. See Genesis xv., 12-15.

In 1706 B. C. (Genesis xlvi., 1-6) God confirmed this promise to Jacob (Israel,) at which time, according to the common Bible chronology, Jacob and his family—about seventy persons—removed from Palestine or Canaan, and began their sojourn in Egypt. See, also, Acts vii., 17-19.

The texts relating to the confirmation of the promise to Abraham are Psalm cv., 7-12, and Galatians iii., 16-17, with perhaps others.

Israel left Egypt 430 years after this confirmation, according to Exodus xii., 29-37, 40, 41; Galatians iii., 16, 17.

On this point the usual method of computing the 430

years of the sojourn of the children of Israel in Egypt has been from the time that the promise was first made (Genesis xii., 1-10, commonly placed B. C. 1921 or 1923,) instead of the date at which it was confirmed to Jacob (B.C. 1706.) For the promulgation of this error see Josephus' Antiquities, book 2, chapter xv., section 2; the Septuagint translation of Exodus xii., 40, etc. According to all these Israel dwelt in Egypt only 215 years, instead of 430, as promised to Abraham.

Concerning this matter, Rev. A. R. Fausset, in his note on Galatians iii., 16, 17, says: "The dispensation of the promise began from the call of Abraham from Ur into Canaan, and ended on the last night of his grandson Jacob's sojourn in Canaan, the land of promise.... It is from the end, not the beginning of the dispensation of promise, that the interval of 430 years between it and the law is to be counted." The law was delivered to Moses at Mt. Sinai in the third month after the Israelites departed from Egypt.

If Mr. Fausset is right, and his views harmonize with Psalm cv., 7-12, and Galatians iii., 16, 17, we may safely add 207 years to the commonly received chronology of the New Testament, and place the birth of Jesus in the year of the world 4211, instead of 4004 A. M. as is usually reckoned. Add the present year of the Christian dispensation, 1884, and we discover that more than 6000 years have elapsed since the creation, so that the midnight is long past, and the Sabbath morning of the world is about to dawn. The signs of the times, according to the word

of the Lord, indicate that the triumph of Christ and his redeemed is not far distant. Are we, each of us, ready for the coming of the Bridegroom?

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE THINGS OF GOOD REPORT RECOMMENDED BY ST. PAUL.

In his epistle to the earliest Christian church at Philippi the apostle Paul recommended its beloved members, with much other wholesome advice, to think on things of good report—things of Christ-like character, and approved of God and all pure-minded men. (Philippians iv., 8, 9.) Paul had but one standard of excellence, and that standard he raised on every occasion, and called upon all men to admire and maintain. That standard was Christ in all his offices of Redeemer, Mediator and King; Christ in the flesh, and at the right hand of God; Christ in whom he could do all things, bear all things, and hope for all things. He could see more excellence in Christ than almost any other man of his times, and in the power of his love and admiration for his blessed Master he distinguished himself as a faithful worker in his vineyard. Succeeding ages of the followers of Christ have greatly honored the man who was so sincere, so earnest, so patient in his ministry.

The things of good report are many; so many, indeed, that if men would but consider them as earnestly and constantly as they should, the contemplation of them would

drive from the mind all meaner thoughts. But these things of good report, as viewed from the Bible standpoint, are opposed to the follies and fashions of the world in such a degree that they are not appreciated as they should be by the masses of mankind. There is a tacit acknowledgement that they are good things, and much glittering sentimentality has been expended upon them, in prose and verse, in the pulpit and out of it, but until the human heart is converted from sinfulness to righteousness, as Paul's was, human understandings cannot fathom their meaning or their value.

Among the things of good report upon which the Scriptures recommend us to meditate, are the truths which the Bible reveals to every seeker after truth; whatever is honest before God and man; whatever is just, and pure, and lovely, and virtuous; and as all these things are but elements of the Christian life, we have the promise that if we think upon and do them, the God of peace shall be with us.

Does the unconverted soul hesitate, and say, with a feeling of abasement, these things are too good—I can never attain to such excellence as the Bible recommends? Remember that Paul, who called himself the chief of sinners, and persecuted the church of Christ, and killed its members by his officious zeal against them, said, in after-years, when he was himself a persecuted Christian, “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.” No man understood his own weakness, his own unworthiness, better than Paul, and yet in his faith and love for Christ he could triumph even over death.

In another epistle (Galatians v.,) Paul advises the followers of Christ to "walk in the Spirit"—that is, in the light and teachings of the Holy Ghost—"and ye shall not fulfill the law of the flesh; for the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary one to the other." In this connection he names (verses 19, 20, 21) the works of the flesh, a fearful catalogue of common sins in which the wicked find delight. Then, in strong and brilliant contrast to these soul-destroying iniquities, he places for our consideration the fruit of the Spirit produced in the soul of the converted man—love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness and temperance—virtues against which there is no law—things approved by God, and of good report among the angels of heaven.

Again, in his first epistle to the Corinthians, Paul calls our attention to other things of good report which form an important portion of the Christian character, and which it will do us good to think about earnestly and obediently. He is writing, in the thirteenth chapter, of the active love, or charity, which God desires to have abound in the hearts of his children; that love that suffereth long, and is kind; that envieth not; that doth not boast, and is not puffed up with pride; that doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things (that God and common sense teach us to believe,) hopeth all things, endureth all things, and never faileth; which is the greatest of all virtues.

The Bible is full of wisdom to which all men ought to attain, and will help us to gain it if we search diligently for it with meek hearts and due reverence. It is a common-sense book, so plainly revealing the truth of God that even the weak-minded and ignorant may be benefited by it. It is a book to be studied carefully and constantly, with the best results to the honest seeker. It is a book to be prized above all other books, for it teaches us how to live and how to die. It is Christ's legacy to us, to be dearly cherished until he comes again. "Think on these things."

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE SINS OF GREAT CITIES—NINEVEH AND CHICAGO COMPARED.

THE sins of Nineveh and of Sodom were many—so many that God blotted both out of existence by fire. The sins of Nineveh and Sodom are rife in Chicago, and Chicago knows something of the horrors of destruction by fire. The parallel between Nineveh and Chicago, judging from the prophecies of God, by the pens of Nahum and Zephaniah, and the sacred historians, is very close.

Nineveh was twenty miles long and twelve broad, and would have required a "belt railroad" sixty miles in length to surround it. It was not only the capital city of prosperous Assyria, but a metropolis remarkable for the number of its inhabitants, its strength, its grandeur, its

wealth, and its wickedness. Long before its final destruction God sent his servant Jonah to arouse its citizens to a sense of their danger by preaching the shortest and most effective sermon on record: "Yet forty days and Nineveh shall be destroyed." Well did the people know the cause of this threatened judgment upon the city. The king, the municipal authorities and the inhabitants were deeply convicted of their sins, truly repented and reformed, and Nineveh became a monument of God's mercy, for then he spared it. But after a season the city relapsed into its former sinfulness, and became a stench in the nostrils of God. His mercy was turned to fury, and the city was completely destroyed, about six hundred years before Christ. "This is the rejoicing city that dwelt carelessly, that said in her heart, I am, and there is none beside me; how is she become a desolation, a place for beasts to lie down in! every one that passeth by her shall hiss and wag his hand! Wo to her that is filthy and polluted, to the oppressing city! She obeyed not the voice; she received not correction; she trusted not in the Lord; she drew not near to her God!"—Zephaniah ii., 15; iii., 1, 2.

Chicago to-day is sinning, like Nineveh, against the light of God and the gospel of truth. Look at our three thousand whisky-shops; our hundreds of gambling rooms; our open and increasing desecration of the Sabbath; our pleasure-seeking in all God-forbidden places and methods; our idolatry of money; our indifference to holy things, and general irreverence and blasphemy towards God; and then

let us ask ourselves, where will these things end? It is true that God does not sit in judgment against the nations every day, but in his sight the wicked are already condemned, and he has appointed a day in which he will judge the world, and that without mercy towards those who have willfully disobeyed. It is true that he has many faithful servants here who cry aloud against our social sins; it is true that the gospel of salvation is preached throughout all the city, but these warnings and promises fall upon deaf ears and veiled hearts, even if they are heard at all. The church and the world have joined their hands in pleasure-seeking for the increase of church funds and influence, and vital religion is smothered in the houses of its professed friends. The Bible is read almost everywhere, but it is a sealed book to thousands, for they will not earnestly search the Scriptures for themselves. The Thomases and the Ingersolls are looked up to as intelligent, religious leaders, but they offer nothing so touching, so pure, so effective, as the simple words of Christ: "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." (Matthew xi., 28-30.) "For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother." (Matthew xii., 50.) But it was the same Lord and Saviour who said, "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." (Luke xiii., 3, 5.) This was the condition upon which Nineveh was once saved

from destruction; for want of repentance it was blotted out of existence. Will Chicago heed the lesson?

Individual repentance and reform can alone shield the sinner from individual destruction. Upon such the precious blood of Christ is freely poured with saving and cleansing power. Then "turn ye, turn ye—why will ye die?"

CHAPTER XXXV.

TWO FABLES—THE SIN OF COVETOUSNESS—ADVERSITY NOT ALWAYS AN EVIL.

COVETOUSNESS.

OF all the sins against which God has set his face and his especial commandment, there is none more despicable in the individual than covetousness. The apostle Paul denounces it as idolatry. It is born of a spirit that would lead one to convert to his own use the property of his neighbor, did not the law forbid; and, indeed, where the moral discipline is not sufficiently strong to withstand temptation, the next step in the course of wickedness is theft itself. The careful parent should look with seriousness upon the early exhibition of a disposition so fraught with evil and born of selfishness; and if by friendly counsels he cannot disgust his child with a sin so mean and dangerous as covetousness, he may tremble for the future character of his offspring. Its danger lies in the great variety of ways in which it may assail one, at all times, and

the certainty of its leading, under unchecked indulgence, to worse offenses and the most disastrous consequences. These sorrowful results are recorded day by day in the newspapers, in the embezzlement of public and private funds, the squandering of trust-moneys, and the defalcations of numerous bank officers. The blandishments of wealth, the indulgence of vanity, especially as regards dress, ornaments or other sources of personal gratification, are apt to engender in youthful minds and in the breasts of the idle and unstable an unlawful longing for the property of others often considered harmless, but ultimately inducing extravagance and discontent, if not quickly counteracted by better influences.

A FABLE.

Covetousness and her brother, Theft, one day rambled through the streets of a great city. Covetousness found many things to admire, and desired to possess them, but was restrained by a fear of shame. Not so, however, with Theft; for whenever Covetousness expressed a wish for anything that Humanity cherished, Theft, watching his opportunity, would seize upon it and secrete it about his person. After a time the thief was detected, and he and Covetousness shared equal punishment for the crime in which both had equally participated.

ANOTHER FABLE—ADVERSITY NOT ALWAYS AN EVIL.

Adversity visited Humanity, who had long enjoyed great possessions, and after expelling Prosperity, who had been the guardian of Humanity, cruelly began to lay waste the property of the latter. His barns and stacks

were burned, his herds and flocks perished with famine and disease, his crops failed, and he and his family became beggars. Adversity did not yet leave them. Hovering near, as they wandered through the morass of Despondency, he pointed out the Hill of Contentment, on the further side, and there they beheld the bright form of Peace beckoning them to the summit, where stood the Temple of Joy. Encouraged by the sight, with renewed energy the unfortunate family soon emerged from the morass, and hastened up the hillside, still attended by Adversity. As they reached the portals of the temple and knelt there in gratitude, Adversity disappeared, leaving them in the enjoyment of happiness at the change which had been so singularly wrought in their condition.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

GLANCES AT CHRISTIAN LIFE AND LABORS—ORDINANCES OF THE CHURCH.

THE sunlight glimmers through a crevice in the shutter of the old church window opposite to which we sit this first glad Sunday morning of summer, and as it creeps across the aisle and falls inside our pew, we hail it as a favorable omen of the Lord's day. Now it shines directly upon the open Bible beside us, illuminating, like a gleam of glory, this favorite verse: "He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be

my son." (Rev. xxi., 7.) We accept the omen, with an ejaculation of gratitude and praise for the gospel promises.

There is a little child, not yet three months conversant with the affairs of its earth-life, whom its parents are about to consecrate to the service of its Saviour, for the glory of the Father, by the rite of baptism. As soon as the good clergyman has offered his opening prayer, and the people have sung a hymn of praise, the infant, innocent and helpless, will be commended to the favor of its Creator and Redeemer.

We are not special pleaders for the necessity of baptizing our children before they reach a degree of responsibility that can distinguish wrong as opposed to right. In truth, ever since the Master took little children into his arms, blessing them as children never were blessed before, they have been the earthly symbols of a spirit that can qualify us for the kingdom of heaven—a spirit without which, the Redeemer tells us, we cannot enter therein. To consecrate them in their innocence to their Friend and Intercessor is but an humble acknowledgment of our obligations to him for the love and mercy ever manifested toward us and ours; but so far as baptism is required to insure the eternal happiness of the child, should the Father early call it home to himself, we are constrained to consider it as a ceremony that (in this respect) possesses no especial efficacy. Its baptism, however, in view of the sacred vows of its parents in its behalf, serves to draw their hearts still closer to the Saviour, and forms a new link

in the silken chain that binds the Christian to the throne of God.

To-day, the first Sabbath of the month, occurs the usual celebration of the saerament of the Lord's Supper; and the spirit of the text, as of the occasion, enters largely into the sermon:

“This is my commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you.”

Christian love is deeply rooted in our pastor's heart, and his lips and daily life bear witness to its holy influences. It is his belief (and why should it not be that of others?) that heaven will be, for those who are permitted to reach it, a scene of never-ending joy and love; not so much of rest—especially not of idleness, as many are prone to hope and pray; a place and condition where the affections, spiritualized and sanctified by divine grace, will gain an intensity that we, in the body, cannot realize. There we shall expect to find everything blissful, with that cessation of onerous labor and care which our bodies so incessantly crave; but we shall no more need *rest* than we shall *light*, because fatigue and darkness will alike be forever banished from that blessed domain.

Christian love and Christian unity!—a heaven of joy lies in our feeble understanding of those enduring principles. That love which is diffused throughout the universe from the Great White Throne—that unity which binds us closer than brethren and sisters to the Lord Jesus who has redeemed us from eternal misery, who washes away our

sins in his precious blood, and who acknowledges us before his Father as worthy heirs of his kingdom forever! Angels attune their harps in praise of this glorious fellowship and love, enjoying it in full fruition in the realms of the blessed, while we yet grope in the dimness of earthly life, lighted only by our comfortable and sufficing faith.

And so the simple elements of bread and wine become to-day a bond of affinity between man and his fellow-men that no evil power can sever, against which not even hell itself can prevail, and which, by its mysterious and sacred influence draws the human spirit nearer to its God!

SUPPOSE a Christian man should resolve that every day, at a certain hour, he will seat himself at the junction of two busy streets in his town or city, and there read aloud, without note or comment, our Saviour's Sermon on the Mount. He has the sanction of the civil authorities, and the spirit of his Master in repeating his gracious words. Is not this missionary labor? Week after week, in the same place, and at the same hour, the reader presents, in a clear, earnest voice, the beatitudes, the pure lessons and solemn warnings of our Lord. Not a word of his own, or of himself, or aught but the scripture selected, does he utter. He has prayed that his ministrations may be acceptable to God, and beneficial to his fellow-men, and he leaves the result with his Creator.

Curiosity to learn what he is doing will naturally attract the attention of the people toward him. Distinctly and reverently he gives utterance to those beautiful sen-

tenees which mean so much, and whose issues are eternal life or endless destruction. A Christian stops and listens for a moment, bearing away with him a blessed promise to cheer him in his day's industry. A laborer, ignorant and blasphemous, rests for a few seconds, leaning on his pickaxe, and hears his sin of profanity solemnly rebuked, and it recurs to his memory afterwards, and condemns him a dozen times that day, as he gives vent to his senseless oaths. The busy, money-loving man scarcely halts, as he passes, to call the reader "a fool" for idling away his time in that manner. A Jesuit priest listens to a verse and mutters, as he hastens on and shrugs his shoulders, about "that old corrupt Greek version." A rude youth flings a word of derision at the reader, hears the forty-fourth verse of the fifth chapter of Matthew, and becomes quiet and thoughtful. A freethinker smiles contemptuously as he goes by, but he carries with him in his conscience a poignant sting, for he has heard how the whole body may be cast into hell. The dilatory servant learns that he cannot acceptably serve two masters at once. The sensual man and woman hear their wickedness denounced. The feeble saint receives fresh courage as he remembers that he is to "take no thought for the morrow" with regard to his needs, and walks on with a deeper trust in his Heavenly Father's loving-kindness and protecting care.

Thus the simple work goes on, and Bible truths are scattered far and wide, with more or less blessed effect, as they fall upon good or stony hearts. The seed is sown. Paul may plant, and Apollos water. The people may hail

the word with gladness, or presumptuously refuse to receive it. God knows all about it. But so it has been in all ages. What the result may be, he knows also, and it will add to his glory, even through the wrath of men. Aye, though the reader be reviled and spit upon, as was his Saviour, or be stoned to death, as was Stephen, by the populace, God's word is sure to remain and prosper.

A good many of the troubles of human life arise from a disregard of the scriptural injunction, "Be content with such things as ye have." It is so natural to desire changes in our circumstances and surroundings, and so easy to find fault with the station of life in which we are placed, that the idea of gaining something better often becomes a ruling passion, leading us to do things for that purpose that greatly increase our annoyances and real troubles, without producing the benefit we anticipated. A contented spirit is better than a kingdom. "Man wants but little here below, nor wants that little long." A little that a poor man has and enjoys, is better than an abundance of worldly prosperity with great care, anxiety and discontent. The necessities of the body are easily supplied, but its fancied wants (especially if unrestrained by grace) often draw heavily upon the best-filled purse.

WE speak, with the apostle, of "fervent prayer," "effective prayer," and "prevailing prayer," which in reality possess the same meaning. In either case this sort of

prayer is founded on temporal and spiritual human needs and divine grace, mercy and peace, purchased for us in the redemption of the world by the Lord Jesus Christ. Fer- vency is but the expression of earnestness and sincerity, and a prominent feature in effective or prevailing prayer. See James v., 15-18, compared with Matthew vi., 5-15. And that prayer will be the most effective and prevailing to which the Lord, at its close, can utter the "Amen."

CHAPTER XXXVII.

SOME MEMORIES OF A BEAUTIFUL CHARACTER.

FANNIE C—— died in the vicinity of Chicago, September 13, 1880, aged twenty-three years and three months.

This young woman possessed within herself many of the elements of true greatness, although her name is not written in the lists of famous women. In her brief existence there was no childhood, as in the lives of other girls —that period when most children find pleasure in childish amusements and pursuits. Favored with an intellect far in advance of her juvenile years, she found continuous delight in literary and other mature avocations, and under these circumstances her childhood and youth were, at an early day, merged into a gentle womanhood, rich in energy, patience, and amiability.

For those who knew her best her life had a wondrous charm, as she gradually developed those traits of charac-

ter which made her beautiful, and endeared her to all around her.

The fashions and follies of the world found no place in her esteem. While she was the warm friend of all who claimed human sympathy, she was scrupulous in the choice of her companions. Her moral perceptions were exquisite. The vulgar and unclean might excite her pity, but she shrank from fellowship with whatever was debasing to humanity. At all times she found delight in “whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report.” Oppression and deceit were especial abominations in her sight.

In the days of her prosperous youth it was her privilege to travel extensively in and along the coasts of her own country, and the benefits derived from these journeys were manifested in the maturity of her after-years.

Of course, a mind like hers sought frequent companionship in books, and while her reading was limited, it was always of the elevating order of literature, and not the ordinary trash of the circulating library. Prominent among her favorite books was the New Testament, in whose pages she found congenial sentiments, the spirit of which seemed to enter largely into her every-day life. Very noticeable was the child-like confidence which she reposed in the wisdom and goodness of her Heavenly Father to order all things aright; and when, through adverse cir-

cumstances, she was plunged into deep affliction, and her domestic cares were greatly increased, she never murmured, but her faith in God, and her gratitude to him for all his mercies, were distinguishing characteristics of her mind.

Success as a literary writer was her ruling ambition, and she possessed a talent in this direction that, under more favorable circumstances of life, might have won for her fame and competence. Even without the advantages that wealth and a higher education would have bestowed upon her, there was a positive merit in her literary creations.

But it was in her social and filial relations that her real nobility of character was most attractive. There was no selfishness in her composition. To make those around her happy, comfortable, pure, and reputable, she often sacrificed her own comfort and happiness; and by her devotion to her family interests she lost her health and went down to the grave, deeply mourned by those who had enjoyed her sympathy and love. Of her it can indeed be truthfully said that she lived and died for the dear ones of her humble household.

Peace to her ashes! The home bereaved by her death sadly misses her, but the memory of her virtues is like a precious odor, filling the places which shall know her no more forever.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

A GOOD GENIUS—THE POSITION OF LABOR AND LABORERS
IN SOCIETY.

BEFORE Adam it existed. With him it tilled the garden of Eden. With his sons it established altars of worship, and laid the foundations of society. When Noah constructed the ark, it assisted him through all those long years in which men laughed him to scorn; with him it escaped the dangers of the flood, and with him and his progeny it aided in redeeming from destruction a drowned world, and in bringing it to a new perfection. When the tower of Babel was reared on the plains of Shinar, it added stone to stone, until the confusion of tongues forever put an end to the erection of that wonderful structure. It was with the children of Israel while they languished in bondage under the tyranny of Pharaoh. For them it gathered straw and clay, and by its aid they formed the Egyptian bricks. When Solomon erected the temple of Jerusalem, it was there and assisted in its construction, as well as in beautifying it for worship.

Nations have arisen at its behest. The palaces of kings, the hovels of the poor, the temples of the pious, and

the stables of the brute, have all sprung into existence by its magical power. The arts and sciences are indebted to it for the first steam-engine, the first mill, the first vessel, the first telegraph, the first railway, the first steamboat, and not one has since been built without its aid. It laid the keel and fashioned the iron frame of the Great Eastern; it piled the huge pyramids of Egypt; it carved the Sphynx; it reared the crystal palaces of mighty nations, and set its throne therein; it wrought all weapons of offense and defense; it builds the homes of peace, plows the fields, sows the broad acres, reaps the full harvest; wove the sensitive electric cables that underlie the seas, and shows its power and skillfulness in the great public edifices of the world.

It is always busy. Deep in the mountain tunnels; in the dark mines of the far-off territories and foreign lands; in city and in forests; on hill-tops and in valleys, on farms, on board of ships in every quarter of the globe; in workshops and studios, and wherever mankind congregates, there it is found, and by its aid are established our commerce, our means of travel, and all our institutions of worship, education, reform and punishment.

It adds dignity to honesty, and comfort to leisure. To the poor it is a firm friend, to the rich a faithful servant. It lives for all men, despised by many, but honored by more, making enviable reputations for its adherents, and ever giving its influence for the progress of the human race. Deprive the earth of its presence, and chaos would return. It is the heritage of the good, and the enemy of

vice. All men live by it, and without it life, here and hereafter, would be miserable. It is not a myth, but a glorious reality—the good genius of mankind, and its name is—**LABOR.**

“LABOR is prayer,” erroneously wrote an enthusiast. “Labor is safety, honor and wealth,” say the political economists. In the stern duty established by divine wisdom—“Six days shalt thou labor,” and the monition of the same high authority—“Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might,” are the key-notes of human progress in the arts and sciences.

The toil to which the first man and his seed were condemned by their Creator for disobedience served to awaken new impulses in the hearts of succeeding generations. In those early ages light had not come into the world as it has now. Intellect was cast in ruder moulds. Muscle predominated. The germs of many inventions lay dormant in human minds. To-day we are building upon the deep foundations of the past, fulfilling the visions of the ancient seers. Knowledge has increased, and “the sweat of the face,” whereby man was destined to gain bread, has become the evidence of honorable thrift—the seal of individual and national success in secular progress.

In the past (and sometimes in the present age), while mankind have not withheld their homage to genius, nor failed to appreciate the substantial triumphs of labor, they have been too apt to forget the interests of the laborer, if

not to ignore his existence; to undervalue him as a fellow-being as, day by day, he sold his strength in a subordinate position for the means wherewith to purchase food for his household,—whose skill fashions the rich cornice or rears enduring walls, stone by stone, and, obedient to the will of knowledge, in the behalf of capital, erects "a temple where a god might dwell." Sir Christopher Wren is dead, and so are the workmen who shaped and piled the foundations of St. Paul's Cathedral in London. Sir Christopher lives on in history; the names of his laborers are forgotten.

The United States of America, rejoicing in more than a century of federal government, and marvelously prosperous and honored as a nation, has solved the problem whether there is in the people sufficient integrity to govern themselves, and at the same time has advanced creditably in the arts and sciences. Since the birth of the nation a host of antiquated notions have been revolutionized; and, embracing the largest portion of a continent, it continues to offer peaceful homes and profitable employment to people whose rights and privileges have been too greatly restricted in their native lands. Under any other system of government the same progress might have required a thousand years.

But while the adaptation of federal institutions to all the needs of our country has been made strikingly manifest, not less apparent or important is the part performed in this national exaltation by manual labor. Protected by beneficent laws, untrammeled by the exactions of an

idle and dissipated aristocracy, the American laborer has enjoyed educational opportunities unknown abroad; and his intelligence, observation and skill have proportionately increased with his advantages. Indeed, in this country, skillful and educated workmen are the rule rather than the exception. Here the majority of the artisans can vary their employments as circumstances dictate, and thus earn a subsistence, if nothing more, when their legitimate avocations are not so remunerative. Nor is the mechanic, in his proper pursuits, so strictly confined to departmental business as in other countries. Here his ingenuity and skill may find scope in making anything from a pin to a steam-engine. His talents are not circumscribed, but may take a wide and practical range and strike out new paths in any field of industry through which his genius and inclinations lead him. Seeking information through legitimate channels, the intelligent artisan may win for labor that respect which it ought to claim in any nation that seeks to achieve greatness, wealth and public credit. Here, also, capital is usually controlled by practical men, and finds a thousand avenues for profitable investment, so that labor is generally in good demand. Hence the public poor-house is despised, except as a home for broken-down mendicants, and the manhood of the workman is not crushed out by heartless overseers. The laborer is therefore enabled to rise superior to all the obstacles of ignorance and poverty, and gain independence and competency. His children are taught at the public expense, and trained (if they will) in morals and industry at the

Sunday and sewing-schools; his opinions and rights are respected by the most influential and wealthy members of society, and his vote can carry weight in the improvement of his own condition, as well as that of the nation.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

THE SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED.

THE American politician who designated the laborers of this country as the "mudsills" of our social fabric gave utterance to the expression with a bitterness that he meant should be overwhelming. It fell as harmlessly upon the objects of his denunciation as water cast upon the ground. It has passed into history, but it injured no one, unless it was the man who uttered it.

The writer was for years familiar with the operations of the police court of the city of Chicago, and became cognizant of the fact that the vicious, degraded and discontented who there, day after day, underwent penalties for infractions of various ordinances were usually not of the industrial classes. The worst prisoners were those who preferred to live by their vices, wear good clothing and "flashy" jewelry, and had hands as soft as those of idle women. The majority were those who would rather steal than labor, who would not serve their employers faithfully, who had little ambition beyond satiating their de-

praved appetites, and delighted most in the excitement of wickedness.

Those who decry labor are invariably persons whose ideas have been perverted by the circumstances of their lives. They are not compelled to seek a livelihood by manual labor. They have but to need—and take. They toil not, for they consider it degrading; and inherited fortune or the gambler's "luck" smooths their pathway through the world, too often at the expense of every generous, manly sentiment. Consumers of the products of honest industry, they seldom hesitate to despise the soiled faces and callous hands of the artisan, and set up themselves as barriers to his social advancement by denouncing him as a menial.

It is very evident that Providence designed us all to work, each in his peculiar sphere, with hands or brains. "In the theatre of life," says an ancient writer, "it is reserved only for God and the angels to be lookers-on." There is so much to do—so much of error to tear down, so much of goodness to build up, so much of necessity to meet, so much of taste to gratify—that with each succeeding generation, in connection with the rapid growth of population, comes a proportionately increased demand for labor of the mind or muscles. The idler is the stumbling-block in the advancement of the age. The field of labor is no longer circumscribed. The improvements in machinery have opened up new avenues of industry, and skill and activity are in demand. Sober and skillful mechanics, the young and the middle-aged, almost al-

ways find employment, if they are willing to lay aside any undue pride of position and deny themselves the unremunerative pleasures of idleness. The genius of the inventor may be exercised in devising means to overcome the difficulties of industry, while the farmer and artisan are enabled to reap the benefit of his wisdom in the number and improved productions of their labor. Nor are we to believe that even the angels remain passive spectators of human industry, but perform their respective and higher duties with fidelity and cheerfulness.

With the blessing of heaven upon honest industry, the position of the workingman possesses a dignity and importance which, from a lack of self-reliance and prudence, he too often fails to appreciate in all its fullness; and for this reason he also, too often, falls a victim to the wiles of designing men, by yielding his right of suffrage and personal influence to subserve bad and ruinous ends. Indeed, industrious and honest laborers frequently (but let us hope they do so ignorantly) contribute to the success of evil men and measures, and exert themselves to elevate the very individuals whom they should shun and oppose. Politicians and sharpers who too often govern their opinions and votes are only men, and there is no reason why workingmen should possess less strength of mind, less freedom of thought, less religion, or less value socially, than those who, by the possession of wealth or influence, would degrade them to the status of a mere machine to be run in the interest of worldly ambition. No, it is rank injustice to place the laboring man or woman, the

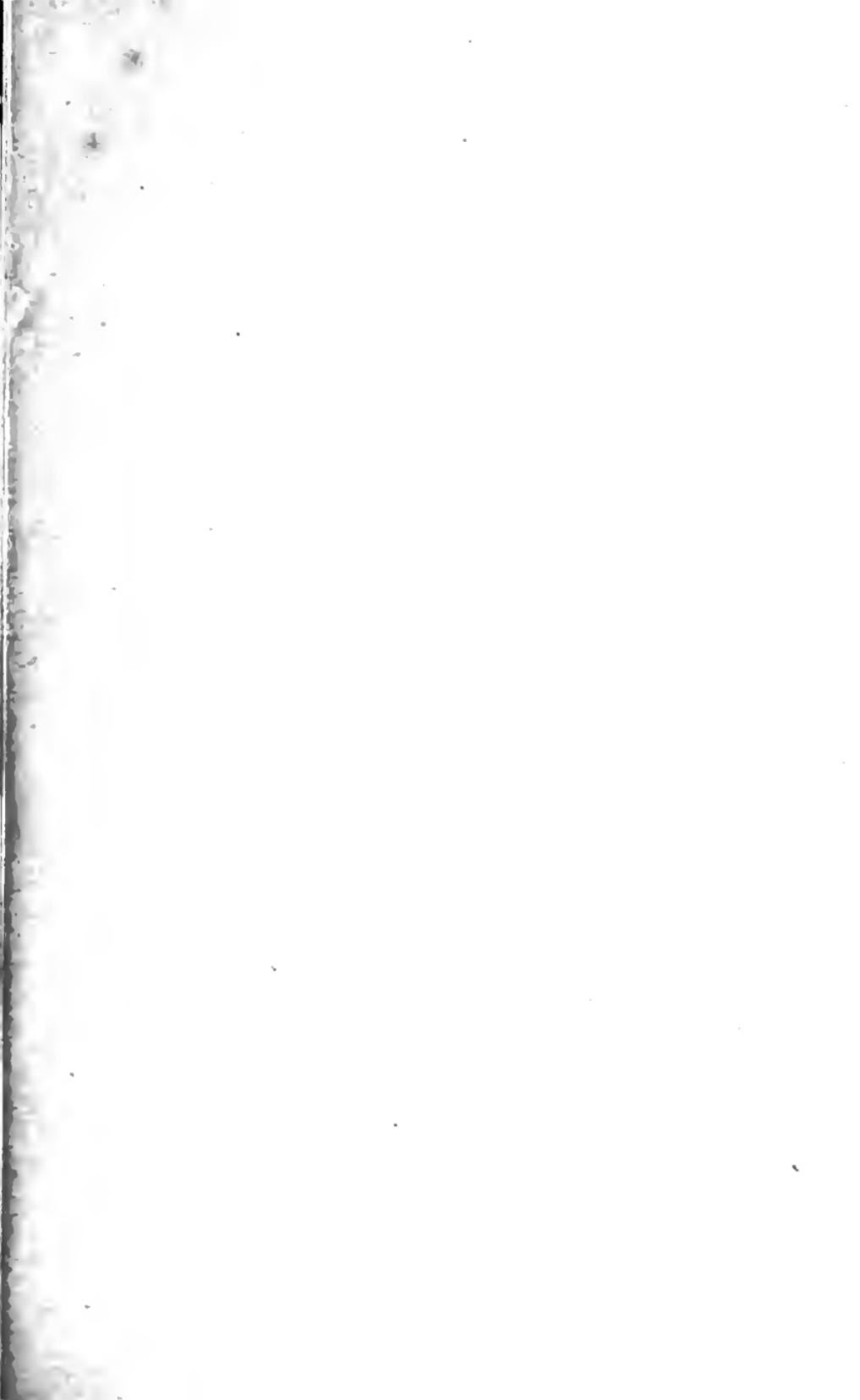
farmer, the mechanic, or any honest producer, among what are commonly called "the lower classes." If any class on earth may be considered "low" in the social scale, it comprises those who grind the faces of the poor, spend money without earning it, consume without producing, scrimp the wages of skillful and industrious men and women, and do nothing except handle other people's means.

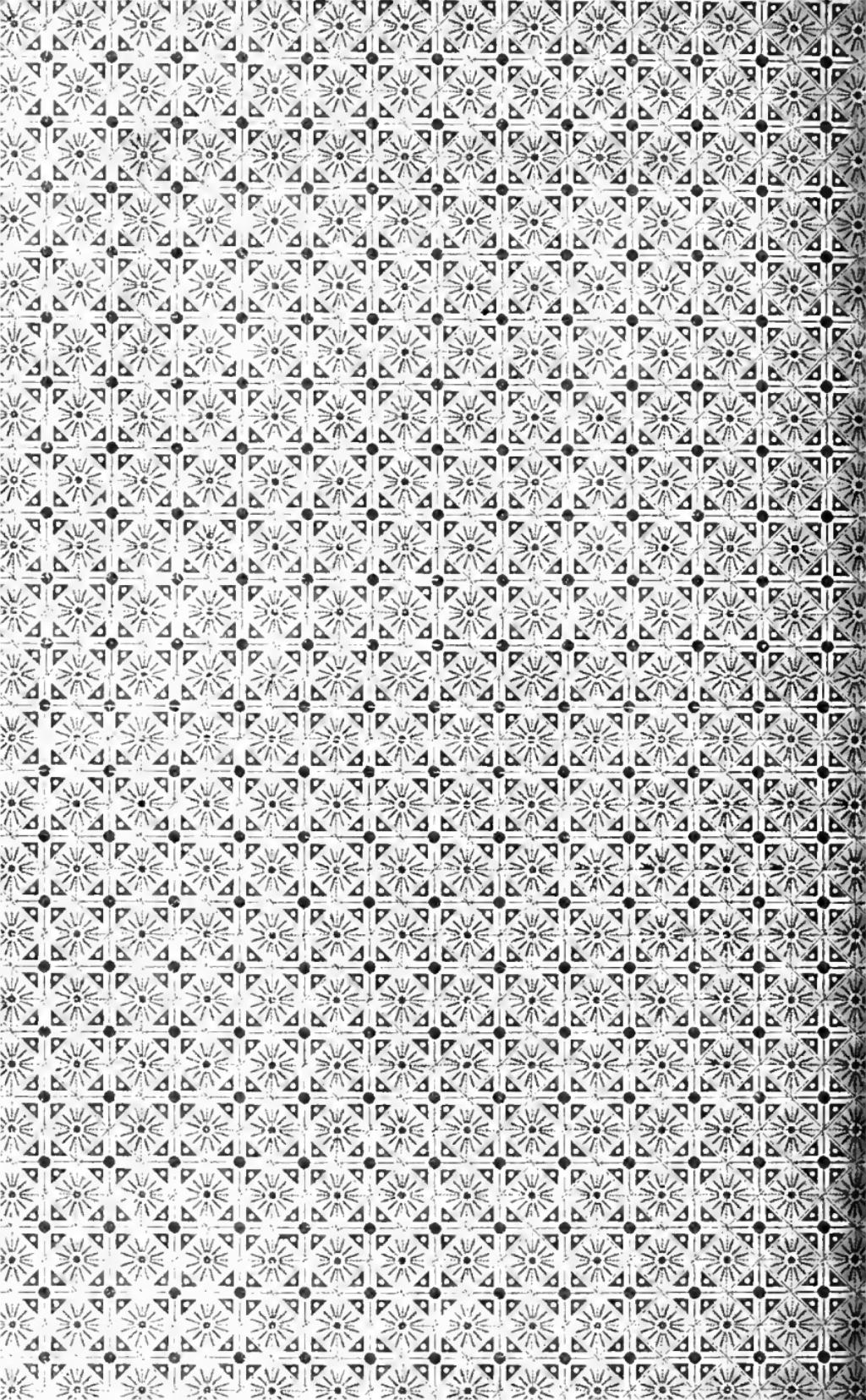
In this connection we are led to offer a few suggestions. Since labor is honorable and profitable, and in harmony with good citizenship and Christianity, we would advise no one to leave reputable employment, however limited its remuneration, for uncertain or visionary projects. We would caution all against "strikes," for, too often, they are an evidence of weakness rather than of independence of spirit; and especially against interfering with the lawful rights of employers, lest grief come to the offenders. While strikes last, the laborer verges on starvation, becomes reckless, and loses more than he gains, financially and morally. John the Baptist, the herald of the great Founder of Christianity, warned his hearers, among other things, to be content with their wages and do violence to no man. (Luke iii., 14.) And the same God who said, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay," (Romans xii., 19) also said, "I will be a swift witness against those who oppress the hireling in his wages." (Malachi iii., 5.) The oppressed laborer, therefore, has an all-powerful Friend in his Creator, who will sustain his rights.

There is no reason why the laboring man or woman should not be a warm-hearted, obedient Christian. Many

who labor hard for their daily bread are the followers of Christ, the stone-carpenter of Nazareth, in whom there was no guile. And this same Christ, perfectly knowing all our needs and infirmities, is the Saviour of the world, the wise, the loving Advocate and Helper of those who put their trust in him. Will he turn away coldly from the oppressed, the poor, the suffering ones for whom he himself suffered and died? He never did, and until heaven and earth shall pass away, he never will. All he asks is our confidence, our love, and obedient submission to the will of his Heavenly Father and ours, and he will do the rest. "If ye abide in me," he says, "and my words abide in you, ye may ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." (John xv., 7.) Is not that a glorious promise?







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